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GENERAL BOULANGER.

I.—HIS CASE.

THE great movement which has taken place in France for the last year or so, and which is developing itself with extraordinary vigour, is a little disconcerting to foreigners who are not familiar with the politics of our country.

English Liberals, like those of Italy and Belgium, do not exactly know what to make of it, and are full of fears and hesitations. Accustomed for years to consider M. Floquet, M. Clémenceau, and M. Goblet as the representatives of French Liberal thought, they are led to accept implicitly their opinion of Boulangism as the expression of the truth.

On the other hand, when they see General Boulanger surrounded by old Republicans such as Rochefort, Targuet, Saisant, such as the writer of this article, they are puzzled, and know not what to think.

The Paris election of January 27th made the confusion even greater. Paris has always been justly considered as the stronghold of the Republic and of progress. It is difficult to admit that this capital of the Revolution has changed her opinion absolutely, and that in condemning the leaders whom she has followed for the last ten or twelve years, her intention was to declare against the Republic itself.

The truth is that Paris is more Republican than ever, and that if the city has come round, is coming round more every day to the National party of which our ex-Minister of War is the

chief, it is because Paris, far from regarding this party as hostile to Republican institutions, hopes from it, on the contrary, the salvation of those institutions.

Those who would clearly understand the events of the last twelve years in France must never lose sight of the fact that the Republic was organised by the Monarchists.

The National Assembly, elected immediately after our disasters in order to make peace, and for that purpose alone, in defiance of law declared itself *constituante* in the hope of creating a monarchy. But it had failed to reckon with intestine broils. At that time the Comte de Chambord was still alive, and although the Bonapartists occupied an unimportant place in the Assembly, united with the Legitimists and with the Republicans, they were enough to hold the Orleanists in check, who in their turn, combining their forces with the Bonapartists and Republicans, held in check the Legitimists.

Despairing then of a Monarchy, the Assembly resolved to declare a Republic, but to frame it as far as possible on the lines of a constitutional monarchy. They said in their hearts that this would be a half-way house, a shelter until the Comte de Chambord's death. They reflected that they could then very well revise the Constitution, and by the change of but one article, by merely replacing the elected President by an hereditary monarch, they would pass without any difficulty from this temporary state of things to that final condition on which their hopes were set.

Their calculations were thrown out. A strong current which can only be compared to that which bears us onward to-day swept France towards a Republic. In spite of official candidates, in spite of the state of siege, in spite of administrative pressure, as soon as the electors were free to declare themselves they sent large Republican majorities to the Chamber. The attempt of the 16th of May was a miserable failure, and in 1881 the old parties were represented by only seventy members out of the 600 who compose the Chamber.

It is incontestable that if the victorious Republicans had remembered the saying of the veteran Thiers, "the country will belong to the wisest"; if they had established a firm Government; if they had been good financiers and able administrators, and had thus come to be not merely tolerated but accepted by foreign Governments, and had won solid allies for France; if they had not insulted the faith of a great portion of the nation, which, without being fundamentally religious, and possessing strongly marked Voltairean tendencies, is Catholic by custom and likes its customs respected; it is incontestable, I say, that if those in power had conducted affairs in such a manner the *droite intransigeante* would have continued to lose ground. At this hour, setting aside a few individuals who took refuge in a purely academical opposition out of respect to the whole of their past life, there would be none but Republicans in France.

Doubtless all Republicans would not be of the same opinion on political matters. There would still be Radical, Liberal, Conservative, Reactionary parties; but parties who would fight their battles within the limits of the Republic, which itself would be unquestioned. It would have been a parallel case to that of universal suffrage, which, strongly opposed at first, has come to be accepted by the whole nation, and there is no longer a single person who does not recognise it and profess himself ready to submit to its judgments. In a word, France would enjoy the boon known to Monarchical England and to Republican Switzerland and the United States, a form of government universally recognised. Parties, instead of being divided into Republicans, Imperialists, and Royalists, would be constituted according to their natural affinities; and the strife between them would be fruitful and beneficial, instead of bringing about laceration and ruin like that which they wage against each other to-day.

But was it possible without changing the instrument—I mean the Constitution which they had inherited from the Versailles Assembly—for the Republicans in power to pursue this

prudent and settled policy so as to make it productive of really good results? I have never thought so, and hence it is that for my own part, from the moment we became masters of the situation I have never ceased to demand revision. There are occasions when men should know how to decide boldly, when a certain momentary disturbance is the best guarantee of a long series of peaceful and prosperous years. America would probably not reckon in her annals the glorious century of which she is so justly proud, if she had retained the first anarchical Constitution which she had framed for herself at the close of the War of Independence; and if Washington, Franklin, and other statesmen of the first rank who guided her destinies had not had the resolution to destroy this first Constitution and to frame that final one which has resisted such fiery trials.

The men into whose hands fell the leadership of the Republican party in France after 1878, notably Gambetta, failed to understand this. They believed in the possibility of maintaining the Republic and universal suffrage with a Parliamentary Constitution more or less similar to that which obtains in this country, but which, if I may be allowed to say so, after doing yeoman service, begins even here in the land of its birth to be less completely successful in its working since, by the extension of the suffrage, Great Britain has made strides towards democracy, and especially since the pressure of the Irish question has placed within the House of Commons a close phalanx, which acts independently of the usual parties.

Space fails me here for a critical study of the Parliamentary system. I cannot show in detail how Parliament is hampered by certain regulations, and how at the same time the Executive is rendered powerless. I cannot describe the perpetual questions of confidence which destroy the value of every debate by substituting personal questions for matters of principle; I cannot expose the unhappy condition of honest deputies on whom the alternative is constantly forced of voting against their opinion and conscience, or of overthrowing a Ministry which on the whole

they trust, and thus running the risk in many cases of replacing it by another with which they have far less sympathy.

But all these matters are well known to those who study politics, and a more detailed statement would tell them nothing new. Everyone is aware that in order to work properly Parliamentary government requires two great parties, and only two parties, which succeed each other in power alternately, and which, disciplined like an army, obey their leaders implicitly, and without ever breaking their ranks. With universal suffrage, however, it is totally impossible to realise this ideal (if, indeed, it be an ideal). The country is divided by countless shades of opinion—it may almost be said that each individual forms a party by himself. The Chamber, which reflects the country accurately, also shows an infinite variety of colours and shades. It no longer contains blues and whites, or blues and reds, but gradations of every tint from pure white to scarlet, like the box of a painter in coloured chalks. How can any Government command a majority in an assembly of this nature? It is simply impossible. No doubt there must be a majority about each question as it arises, but this majority, ever shifting, ever new, composed on each occasion of fresh elements, can never have that fixity without which a responsible Ministry can have no duration, nor, while it exists, that security which alone permits administrators to work to good purpose. Moreover, personal interest, with which we must always reckon, since we deal with men, contributes to this instability and confusion.

In an aristocracy the number of those who aspire to the Ministry is comparatively small, since they are drawn only from those who have great names or belong to great families. The custom of summoning as Ministers only those men whose personal situation justifies political eminence survives when an aristocratic State begins to advance towards democracy. Citizens who do not belong to the nobility may obtain posts in the Cabinet; but then they are citizens who are worthy to fulfil the high duties committed to their charge, for, if they

have not noble birth, they belong to the aristocracy of wealth or talent.

In a democracy which is absolute and without any counterpoise, things wear another aspect. Every man thinks himself capable of filling the highest post, and every man aspires to office.

It was formerly said that in the French army every soldier believed that he might come to wield the marshal's *bâton*. We may say to-day that if every man does not hope for the Presidency of the Republic, at least he sees in himself a possible Minister. And indeed, why not? During the last ten years there has been such a succession of Ministers who seemed in no sense designed by nature for the high position they have held, incapable Ministers, whose very names are forgotten, that there are very few deputies who cannot do as well, or as badly, as they. Everyone says to himself, "And why not I?" And, I may add, that everyone is right. For in the Ministerial instability which prevails, and under a state of things in which office is not bestowed on men specially qualified for their respective posts, but on men who know absolutely nothing of the duties they are called upon to fill, it is clear that the ablest man is on a level with the dullest. Both are equally ignorant of what they ought to know, and are merely machines for signing documents in the hands of their *chefs de division*. At most the clever man has the possibility of learning in office that of which he was ignorant when he entered the Ministry, but time is not allowed him, and as soon as he begins to understand the business for which he is responsible he is replaced by another, who has to serve the same apprenticeship. So each man says to himself with some justification, "And why should not I hold office?" and from this to declaring "I must hold office" is but a step, and a step quickly made.

Everyone seeks, therefore, to be Under-Secretary of State or Minister; round each insignificant candidate revolves a group of yet more insignificant satellites—men who hope to get place

from their patron if he is successful or favours of a kind to advance their electoral influence ; and as deputies have the right of overthrowing Cabinets, and as to do this it is enough to beat the Ministry on any measure, or to carry a legislative proposal that the latter has thrown out on the question of confidence, members can turn to their own profit rights which the Constitution allows them. Groups and sub-groups are constantly formed, alliances made and broken by a series of intrigues, and, by one of those frequent phenomena whereby effects become causes, political instability begets unwholesome ambitions which in their turn beget, or at least encourage, instability.

Moreover, as nations emerge from an aristocratic Constitution, the Parliamentary system can only furnish settled government by instituting a Dictatorship from which all others take their rise because it is an irresponsible Dictatorship. This Minister whose proceedings are imitated by a docile majority, commits himself to actions from which an avowed despot would shrink, because he is sheltered by the lacqueys who call themselves the representatives of the nation.

Hopeless confusion or servile assemblies, this is the result of the Parliamentary system in a democratic country. It was necessary to understand this, and it was clear enough to an observing eye from the beginning. But it seemed good to retain a system so favourable to the paltry ambitions and unavowed covetousness of deputies and senators, with the result that when General Boulanger rose above the political horizon, the people, weary of Parliamentary government but powerless to detect the cause of their sufferings, began to fall away from the Republic herself. They were wrong: and the more one recognises the incompatibility of a democracy and Parliamentarism the more necessary does a Republic appear in a democratic nation.

The Parliamentary system, which rests on fictions that assuredly no one would have invented if he had had an open field to work upon, took its origin in the double desire of nations to govern themselves and to respect at the same time the

traditions of a monarchy. They retained the sovereign that the prestige attached to royalty might lend its strength to the laws and maintain social order, and also in order to prevent contests for the supreme power. But they shifted the actual government from the king to the Parliament by means of the principle of the political responsibility of Ministers.

It was almost impossible to do otherwise without sacrificing royalty. A king who reigns and governs is inevitably a despot. He may be able, enlightened, even liberal, but he is still a despot. Power resides in him alone, and as he is not exempt from the inexorable laws of disease and death, as heredity offers no warranty with regard to his successor, the country is constantly at the mercy of accident. Its policy suddenly veers from one quarter to another without any desire on the part of the people, and often in opposition to its desire.

We have lately seen an example in Germany. The old Emperor William died; his son, a wise man, a philosopher, wore the Imperial crown. Frederic William III. inaugurated a new policy of which the world had only a glimpse on account of the Emperor's illness, but which he would certainly have developed had health and life been granted him. The whole of Germany applauded this policy and desired its continuance. But Frederic was carried off by a terrible disease, and at once, and in spite of the national sentiment, which was never for a moment ambiguous, the young Emperor William returned to his grandfather's policy, which he intensifies in every direction.

Germany has striven to establish a Monarchical Government which shall not be a despotism. In spite of Bismarck's genius the attempt has not proved successful, and she has only succeeded in establishing a despotism, tempered by modern manners. Therefore, from the moment that we choose democracy, and that we condemn Parliamentarism, we must also choose the electoral system in its logical outcome: the Republic.

I know that a few great minds—M. Renan among the number—believe it possible to arrest the movement towards

democracy, to reconstitute not a monarchy alone, but an aristocracy, and to adapt the glory of the past to all that is great and noble in modern times. But these philosophical dreams have nothing to do with realities, and the mischief is that in France these hazy notions are continually introduced into politics, and that whole parties make capital out of them. If everyone accepted the Republic we would certainly organise it, so as to retain all that is good in its present constitution, while eliminating as far as possible the dross. We should not attain to perfection, for nothing in this world is perfect ; but we should establish something which would allow the French people to progress, to develop, to live.

As for the monarchy and the aristocracy, they have but one defect—they are dead. Their study is the science of palæontology, it is no longer natural history. You can no more breathe new life into a defunct aristocracy than you can resuscitate a religion which has ceased to exist. To attempt to restore the *noblesse* is like endeavouring to revive Paganism. Napoleon I. failed in this attempt, and had he returned victorious from Russia he would have been equally unsuccessful.

As for the monarchy, the various dynasties which have reigned in France, each leaving behind it followers and partisans, have rendered it impossible. The chances of history might bring about a restoration, but these chances could not create a royalty now any more than in 1815, in 1830, or in 1832. It would always be a hypocritical and unavowed form of republic, and in fifteen or twenty years the monarch, like the vulgarest head of the executive power, would go to join his predecessors.

There remains the possibility of Cæsarism, but aristocracy and monarchy are quite dead. It may be matter for regret. We may in our studies prefer aristocratic to democratic institutions, we may even elaborate Constitutions on paper which reconcile in appearance irreconcileable terms—but this is pure speculation and has no sort of connection with hard fact.

Therefore, we are confronted, on the one hand, with the

impossibility of reconstructing anything but the simulacrum of a monarchy more frail than the worst republic—partly because a monarchy would bring in its train the Parliamentary system, and especially because monarchy is a species of religion, and you cannot call to life a religion which is no more; on the other hand, by the necessity of escaping from the condition of anarchy under which we are suffering, and which if it endure must destroy the country: such was the problem before us when General Boulanger appeared on the political scene.

In theory the problem is easy of solution. For more than a century France has vacillated between authority and liberty, and, as she has committed the mistake of identifying authority with one of the forms of monarchy and liberty with a Parliamentary Republic, she has gone through a series of revolutions, returning now to authority when wearied by Parliamentary impotence and misgovernment, now to Parliamentarism when tired of authority.

It is enough to recognise that these two terms, authority and liberty, which have been considered as two formulas mutually exclusive, may be united under a single Republican formula. America and Switzerland have found this formula in the separation of the executive and legislative powers, and we have only to borrow it from them and apply it to France, introducing at the same time certain modifications of detail in order to adapt it to our national genius.

But if the problem is theoretically easy of solution it is practically extremely difficult. Placed between those who are satisfied with the actual state of things and would have nothing changed, and the Monarchists who would overthrow the Republic, France would never have resolved on the middle course proposed for the last ten years by those who were capable of rising superior to party spirit, and of divesting themselves of all prejudice of whatever nature. She would probably have continued her series of revolutions, falling ever lower after each, and since these things have a limit for the nations who are not

isolated by the seas, we should, perhaps, have been overwhelmed sooner or later.

The possibility of saving the situation by constituting a republic, unequivocal, national, non-Parliamentary, under which all Frenchmen can be reconciled—has been opened to us by the popularity of General Boulanger. This is why the whole people flock to his standard, the masses instinctively, the politicians who follow him, deliberately.

Thanks to him we shall have a revision of the Constitution by a Constitutional Assembly, which, elected to carry out a very simple and very distinct programme, far from being an incoherent assembly will be disciplined, and under the direction of the General will do for France that which, under the direction of Washington, another assembly did just a century ago for free America. To attain to this result, to conquer the resistance of the representatives of the present system of the Chamber, of the President of the Republic, of the Senate, a strong current of opinion was required, one of those currents which sweep away everything in their torrent, and such currents are not determined by abstractions. Some personality is needed to give them unity and direction.

From 1871 to 1877 there was a man in whom the Republican principle or current was incarnate—Gambetta, and to him are due the triumphs of the Republic. Since his death the Republic has steadily declined. In the same way that Gambetta represented the Republican idea, considered generally, General Boulanger represents to-day the idea of revision and of the foundation of the only government which can flourish among us: a representative Republic based on the *referendum*.

The General enjoyed at first a purely military popularity, and he sought no other. He busied himself with the improvement of the army, and, while remaining resolutely pacific, he strove to place the country in a position to defend herself should she be the object of unjust aggression.

His popularity disturbed short-sighted politicians. Their

vanity was wounded by the diversion of the popular attention from themselves. M. Clémenceau and M. Pelletan joined hands with M. Rouvier and the Right in order to rid themselves of a popular Minister of War, and M. Rouvier, when he became President of the Council, exiled him to Clermont Ferrand.

I need not recall the events which followed; the fall of M. Grévy, of M. Rouvier, the first Tirard Ministry, General Boulanger's dismissal from the army and the creation of the Committee of National Protection. The story is known to all, as also the electoral triumphs which followed. It is not this which astonishes foreigners and which makes the Liberals among them anxious and doubtful.

What does surprise them is to see almost all the Republican leaders bitterly opposed to the General, while he reckons among his adherents almost the entire Right. People wonder how he can thus have the support of the enemies of the Republic and the hatred of the Republicans if he really aims at the consolidation and purification of Republican institutions. It is very simple. General Boulanger has caused a break up of parties; he has caused the troops to revolt against their officers. He has won to himself the discontented of every party, from the Imperialists and Royalists weary of waiting for the return of the Empire or the monarchy, to the Republicans who have ceased to believe in the Parliamentary system.

The Republicans, especially the Radicals, missed an excellent occasion to establish their power for a long time to come. After the follies of M. Rouvier and M. Tirard, when M. Floquet became President of the Council, had he taken General Boulanger as colleague he would have carried the country with him. The Chamber would have thrown him out, but he would have been joint leader of the movement with the General, and at the next elections the Radicals would be victorious in almost every district.

But M. Floquet did not care to be in power only to lose it at once. He is not enlightened enough to look forward to the future.

An honourable man in his private capacity, but vain, without talent or breadth of view, he determined to remain in office, and trusted that hatred of the General would help him to prevent Parliamentary coalitions. He hoped to carry the approaching elections. In fact, Ministers are subject to a curious optical delusion as soon as they are in power. Until then they have intrigued in Parliament and promoted instability by every means in their power, but once Ministers they imagine they can disarm competition and hatred, and that stable government will begin with them. M. Floquet was even more prone than other men to such illusions. Not only did he hope to remain in office till the elections, but imagined that his popularity could prevail against the General's, and he wished to enjoy alone the glory of having conquered "the torn flag of Dictatorship."

On the 27th of January last, at two o'clock in the afternoon he was so sure of his prestige and of his influence in Paris, that he prophesied a majority of 45,000 for Jacques, and he still believed it when some hours later the General went by with his majority of 80,000 votes.

Thus it was that the Republicans made the unpardonable mistake of separating themselves from General Boulanger, who belonged to them, who was of them, and of yielding this strength to the Right which was too clever not to make use of it.

The Right, if Boulanger had not existed, would have ended by obtaining power through their own strength, profiting by the general discontent. But since Boulangism is a fact, the Right can do nothing alone. That party is placed in the same situation as the Left; they must conquer with the General, or submit to be crushed. More intelligent than the Left, they chose victory. Only it is certain that by placing themselves under Boulanger's orders, by raising him to be President of the Republic, by allowing him to constitute under Republican forms a powerful, incorruptible Government, they thus make ducks and drakes of their Imperialist or Royalist preferences.

The most candid among the members of the Opposition

openly avow this and rally to the Republic, happy to have found an honourable way by which they can once more enter into communion with the vast majority of their countrymen. Others make certain reserves; they are Monarchists, say they, but at bottom they know very well that they do not hope to re-establish the monarchy. These reserves are intended for those *doctrinaire* social circles where it would be very bad form to desert too completely and too ostensibly that which one has adored. If, moreover, some few among them sincerely believe that they are progressing towards a monarchy, while they are really tending to the consolidation of the Republic, we need not occupy ourselves in the matter or make ourselves uneasy—we who wish for a Republic. They are absolutely powerless, and can only help us, in spite of themselves, towards the goal to which we tend. This is why, instead of rejecting the aid of the Right, we rather seek it.

We are certain that when the Constitution is revised and sanctioned by the *plébiscite*, and the General is elected chief of the Executive power, all opposition will rapidly subside.

When that day comes, when the Republic, in possession of the constitutional organisation which is indispensable to her well-being, shall show herself, as the General has said to all, the protectress of the weak, when she will be liberal, tolerant, the respecter of all faiths and all consciences, there will then be such an enthusiasm for her that past Governments will have no more power to harm. France will at length have found what England has had for two centuries, and what we have been seeking since 1789—a form of government which all French citizens can accept and live under.

From this point of view I can even rejoice in the concurrence of the Right, which, for a time, and before I had time to reflect, startled me somewhat. If the Left alone had fought on this side we must have won the day, but the conquered Right would have remained in irreconcileable opposition to the Republic. Now, whether they will or no, whether they avow it, or whether they

refuse to realise it, they are absorbed into the new form of Republic, and the moral union of France is accomplished.

I say *is*, and not *will be;* for victory must be ours in a few months, and because it is even now so certain that we have the right to speak of it in the present tense.

As for ourselves, Republicans enrolled from the first in the General's army, by maintaining influence with the Republican forces, which without our efforts would have finally abandoned even the Republic herself, we have preserved sufficient strength to avoid being seized upon by the Right, and to be able to form an honourable alliance and profitable to all, instead of submitting to a reaction which would bring new troubles upon our country, both immediate and remote.

No reaction; respect for progress already obtained; cessation of the policy of intolerance pursued for the last ten years; constitution of the Republic on the lines of a liberal democracy. These are some of the items in the programme of the National Republican party, and from which we hope the most fruitful results for our country.

ALFRED NAQUET.

II.—HIS IMPEACHMENT.

TO-DAY, as in the first hour of its appearance, the remarkable political agitation of the last three years which is associated with the name of M. Boulanger remains an unsolved riddle. The issue is yet in the future, and he would be a daring prophet who should venture to foretell it, for the successive incidents in the development of the movement have been as unforeseen as startling. Each event in this rapid career seems, even now that we have leisure to seek explanations, to be a violation of all the laws of probability, and the future historian will surely find no stranger problem offered for his solution.

A man has suddenly attained the position whence he can raise in his own name the question of a Dictatorship ; a position due to an enthusiasm of mushroom growth like the fashions of the day. He has recruited his followers from every party ; he has won adherents from every class; his influence is owned by the bitterest anarchists among the artisans, by the peasants of the remotest parts of France, by the exclusive caste of the devout and Legitimist nobility.

Assuredly there is nothing new in a man's sudden rise to the position of a Cæsar, especially in the countries of Greek and Latin civilisation. France, alas ! has always been subject to these fatal enthusiasms, and the fear was ever present that her misfortunes had not completely cured her. But on previous occasions there has always been an appreciable cause for this apotheosis of an ordinary mortal. The novelty here is the impossibility of discovering why men have elected M. Boulanger to be the saviour of his country rather than any other of the ten millions of adult Frenchmen.

To confine myself to indisputable facts. An hereditary title

in old monarchical countries, even in many republics, has often explained the extraordinary popularity or extraordinary success of second-rate men ; the addition of a handsome face made the effect irresistible. Under the old *régime* the part played by the second Duc de Guise at the time of the Ligue, and by the Duc de Beaufort at the time of the Fronde may be readily accounted for in this manner; and in more recent days who can wonder that after the Napoleonic epic, whose effect was heightened by legend, the great movement of 1848 should have taken place in the name of Bonaparte, to which we owe the 2nd of December and Sedan? But M. Boulanger is neither a Guise nor a Bonaparte, nor does the blood of Henri IV. flow in his veins.

Still more frequently it is a victorious general who profits by those outbursts of popular enthusiasm which are so dangerous to liberty. Able conduct in war is often enough, even when displayed without success, to raise a man to formidable popularity. But M. Boulanger can boast neither feats of arms nor victory. If he possess brilliant military qualities, they are hidden in the future ; for such qualities can only be discovered on the field of battle. M. Boulanger's share in the war of 1870 remains absolutely unknown, for he then held quite a subordinate position. He took no part in the expedition to Tunis, nor in that to Tonquin. He has risen in rank for the last eighteen years in public offices and ante-rooms. And had his latest military exploit been earlier known, it might have strangled his popularity at the birth ; for he was certainly implicated in the horrible massacre which stains the suppression of the Commune in 1871.

Neither do his political ideas afford any explanation of his success. Not only has he borrowed from others those out of which he makes capital to-day—revision — dissolution—but he only thought of producing them after two years of a popularity he had won without their aid. As for his services as War Minister experts themselves would find it hard to determine them precisely,

and with regard to such matters the public can have but little knowledge or power of appreciation. But it is difficult to attribute definite ideas, or great merit, or profound knowledge, even in his own department, to a man who, since he was deprived of the assistance of the Ministerial staff, has been unable to suggest a single detail in addition to, or to appear at the tribune in favour of, the great military law which he claimed as his own when in power.

I knew M. Boulanger some years ago, and he is the very last man from whom I should have suspected any public danger. It would be worth while to try and sketch him, but the features of the M. Boulanger of those days escape portraiture because of their lack of character. He was, however, what people call a "good-looking fellow," though the squareness of the lower jaw made his blonde countenance a little heavy.

Such was the face, and such the man, intelligent, agreeable, but commonplace. He listened more than he spoke, and what he said was neither brilliant nor pretentious. The only noticeable point about him was a certain easy goodfellowship and a marked desire to make himself agreeable. Nevertheless his outward man, commonplace by nature and simple by design, concealed even then a boundless ambition, an unquenchable thirst for notoriety, a marvellous activity in intrigue, a fixed determination to cultivate or neglect people according to circumstances. We owe to a recent revelation the interesting fact that from his boyhood at St. Cyr, M. Boulanger meditated the career of a Cæsar. He must have suffered much in thirty years of obscurity and poverty, as we may judge from his efforts to emerge from that condition. From the time of the civil war in Paris which followed the disastrous peace of 1871, he tried to bring himself into notice by organising, in the regiment of which he was colonel, a sort of *plébiscite* in favour of legal government. He thought to recommend himself by this proof of zeal, and narrowly escaped punishment for breach of discipline. Afterwards, under Marshal MacMahon he might have been observed to affect a profound devotion, to follow

processions, wax candle in hand, and pay his court to the Duc d'Aumale. After the success of the Republicans on May 16th, he attached himself at one time to M. Jules Ferry, at another to the Radicals, and occasionally courted both parties simultaneously.

But M. Boulanger appears to me to be by no means the most important element in Boulangism. But it was necessary to endeavour to give a clear idea of him if only to show for how little the man's personality counts in the part he has played.

When in the last days of 1885 M. de Freycinet succeeded M. Brisson, he was a little embarrassed about the appointment of a Minister of War. He had to find a general who was on good terms with the Radicals, and who, at the same time, was not on very bad terms with the Moderates. M. Boulanger was almost the only man who satisfied these conditions. It is no secret that while in the Ministry his Radicalism became more marked, and that he passed for one of our firmest friends. Thus, he was concerned in the passing of the law which exiled the Bourbon Princes. His more than resolute attitude on this occasion won him the applause of the advanced party, when one of the princes whom he expelled from the army, the Duc d'Aumale, to whom he had paid court, and to whom he owed his rank of general, published the truly extraordinary letter which M. Boulanger had then written to him, wherein occurred the famous phrase, "Blessed be the day," &c. This was a serious accident; M. Boulanger aggravated it by disputing, to begin with, the text of the letter.

This was enough to destroy a man politically, and people really believed M. Boulanger was destroyed. He was at that time more particularly our friend, and we could not desert him when he seemed to be sinking. But even while we urged extenuating circumstances with regard to the facts which had just come to light, we were agreed that he could never regain his position. A few months later, at the Fête Nationale, on the 14th of July, the annual review of the troops took place in the Champ

de Mars; M. Boulanger's popularity became openly manifest; the day was for him one long ovation.

This is nothing. Paris is subject to these sudden, unforeseen paroxysms. But immediately afterwards, in the depths of the country, among the mass of the rural population which is so slow to move, so sluggish in intellect, among the peasants of the Catholic and monarchical districts, whose wire-pullers at that time detested M. Boulanger, and heaped abuse upon him—this strange popularity began to spread like fire before a wind.

Such, in all its unlikelihood, was the phenomenon which took place. It cannot be attributed to popular songs, which were of later date, nor to the portraits, which were not yet scattered broadcast, nor to the Press, which was lukewarm. Neither can it be attributed to M. Boulanger's words and actions, for at that time he had done nothing special, except give his answers with reference to his unjustifiable letter to the Duc d'Aumale. The cause evidently lay deeper; to understand it we must consider the state of public opinion in France—a state then doubtful and undefined, but clear in the light of subsequent events.

All known parties were becoming exhausted. There is no doubt that the Moderate party, nicknamed the Opportunists, of which M. Ferry is the present leader, and which had been in office for seven or eight years, were regarded with extreme dislike. They had been masters of public opinion, and they had become as unpopular as they were formerly popular. The elections of 1885 had resulted in their signal defeat, they had lost half their strength in the Chamber. The Monarchists of every shade on the one hand, the Radicals on the other had profited by this defeat of the Moderates. But the former soon lost their advantage. In truth, universal suffrage had not declared in their favour, the votes they had won were votes of Opposition; and the by-elections of the two following years taught them how fallacious were the hopes founded on their first success. The fact is that France has no longer in any degree the sentiment or the principles of a monarchy; she has retained only certain

habits and certain instincts. This renders the restoration of the Bourbons almost impossible, and Cæsarism very dangerous. It may be said that the leaders of the Monarchical parties themselves, while preserving towards lost causes a loyalty which does them honour, can ill conceal their weariness and the decay of their faith. The Catholic Church alone ensures a certain permanence to these parties of an earlier day, for she can still boast in the least religious country in the world a power which she owes to her organisation, her wealth, and her adherents.

It would seem that the Radical party must profit by this situation; and, in fact, the by-elections after 1885 appeared to indicate a rapid progress. But they soon lost ground. Whether they made a mistake in showing a want of activity and resolution; whether they were compromised by the advent to power of a Ministry in which they seemed to have friends, and which governed on much the same lines as M. Ferry —from whatever motive, public opinion soon showed itself impatient of their weakness. This weakness, moreover, was common to all three parties, and the country was partly responsible for this state of things. The electors had returned to the Chamber, not a majority, but three minorities of equal strength. The fatal ability with which the then President, M. Grévy, profited by the situation to retain his personal influence, which though well disguised was very real, made the state of affairs yet more serious. The public saw incessant Ministerial crises as sterile as they were frequent, and from which no single reform resulted.

Such a condition of affairs is very dangerous in a land where the people have, so to speak, an intellectual attachment to the freedom of the representative system, but whose temperament and character yet retain something of the manners of an age of personal power. To the early habit of feeling the grasp of a firm hand on the reins of power we must add the military sentiment excited in the masses by a long peace; and we shall easily understand how after ten years of enthusiasm for Parliamentary

strife, of horror of a Dictatorship, of attachment to the civil government, successive mistakes may arouse the most dangerous instincts of the past;—instincts which lie deep, and are quite unconscious, which cannot be expressed in words, and which, reduced to a political formula, would be denied by the vast majority, but which exercise their influence even on those who believe themselves freest from them.

Thus it was that military popularity revived. General Thibaudier, the first Radical general who was ever in office, enjoyed it for a space; Admiral Courbet, had not death prevented him, would probably have reaped the advantage of this phase of public opinion. When, after M. Thibaudier had been dismissed from the Ministry by M. Ferry because he had attacked the Orleans Princes (the Orleanists were always disliked by the electorate), M. Boulanger was attacked and threatened on the same ground by M. Ferry's friends, Paris was unanimous in his favour. The people acclaimed in him the soldier, the Republican, and the enemy of the Opportunists. The Republican provinces joined in the chorus—the others heard it said that there was a general in Paris, a commander-in-chief, applauded by crowds. A general! They all followed suit. The country, weary of crises, disgusted with the weakness of all parties, having learnt to doubt all known and tried men, saw a handsome soldier ride by on a fine horse with a great sword, and cheered him incontinently.

A fancy of this description left to itself would have faded rapidly. Must we recall the incidents which lent it life? M. Goblet had been thrown out on a question of finance; M. Grévy took advantage of this to dismiss M. Boulanger from office by means of a very unpopular junction of the Moderate Republicans and the Royalists. Naturally M. Boulanger's popularity was only heightened. The Wilson scandal and M. Grévy's fall followed. Shameful abuses in the President's palace necessarily lowered the executive power in public opinion, which pronounced itself against the Parliament, and held the Chamber responsible. M. Boulanger had no need either to speak or act, everything was in

his favour. The rest was thrown in—I mean by the rest everything that belongs to fashion. The trivial songs, sung in music-halls, amidst the clinking of glasses and the fumes of tobacco, and the little plaster images sold at the street corners, followed the general vogue. It was a persecution. M. Boulanger took the place of the most exasperating waltzes which can torment the ear. The street boy who passed hummed mechanically the tune composed in his honour, the barrel-organs ground it out in the court-yards of the houses; it accompanied the wooden horses on the terrible merry-go-round; the drunkard as he came home at night sang it, out of tune, between his hiccups; while chromo-lithographs, rude drawings barbarously coloured, and stuck on the bottles in the shops of wine-sellers, greeted the eyes everywhere with the features of the General.

Although from thenceforward M. Boulanger attempted, not unsuccessfully, to draw to his party some members of the Bonaparte faction, all he really gained was that personal popularity which is at the mercy of circumstances to create or destroy. At the end of the winter of 1888, M. Boulanger was still officially nothing but a general who had joined the Radical party. There was certainly in the public mind a latent instinct tending towards Cæsarism which had its share in his success, and on his side the secret determination to seize upon the supreme power at any price. But all this lay hid and would perhaps never have taken form but for the intervention of the second, and perhaps more important element in Boulangism.

The world is rapidly changing. We live in an age of speculation and of advertisement. No scheme, however unsound, fails to find a promoter to launch a company and issue shares. Bankers and stock jobbers understood that in this fashion of the day was the material for a magnificent affair. And the affair was started.

The original idea may have come from an enterprising young man, M. Thiébault, who had just left the Monarchist parties and had not till then distinguished himself in any way. Being

assured of the real connivance and official disavowal of the General, he organised with a few thousand-franc notes the first popular elections. The success was encouraging, and the scandal which brought about M. Boulanger's dismissal hastened the crisis. The affair was launched, and money came in rapidly.

Who supplied it? I am not in the secrets of the police and of the law, but I do not think that it is known. M. Boulanger's explanation, namely, that his expenses are paid out of the subscriptions of his friends and partisans, is simply absurd. We know how little money is produced in France, a country where wealth is much sub-divided, by the most ardent zeal for any cause. We saw this in M. Gambetta's day, whose political reputation rested on a surer basis than that of M. Boulanger, and during the struggle of the 16th of May, when there was far more real enthusiasm. We are not ignorant that even the Monarchical parties, though composed in great part of wealthy men, are often in difficulties for the money to pay the expenses of their propaganda. Is it likely that M. Boulanger and his friends have received several millions in postal orders from their faithful adherents? Who, then, are the shareholders of Boulangism? If I am to believe what I am told, M. Boulanger himself hardly knows at times, and M. Dillon alone is aware of all the details of their financial position. M. Thiébault set the affair afloat, but its organisation is the work of M. Dillon. A retired officer, an intimate of the General, and a promoter of companies, educated in the daring American school, he was the man destined to give to that which was but a passing caprice of Fashion the proportions of one of those great speculations which, as chance directs, result in enormous gains or colossal failure, and in which the American genius delights.

The affair was thus launched on a grand scale. One must have been present in person at a Boulangist election in the provinces in order to realise proceedings common, perhaps, elsewhere, but till now unknown in France. I was myself at such an election in Charente Inférieure. Everywhere there were paid

gangs. At Rochefort they were dock labourers, a rough and violent set of men, who have no fixed home, and sleep where they can in the open air ; these, in return for high pay, threatened to throw into the water all who opposed the hero. At St. Jean d'Angely the police found in the possession of a ticket-of-leave man, the chief of the gang brought from Saintes, the thousand-franc note destined to defray the expenses of the day.

Eye-witnesses have assured me that in the Isle of Ré they saw two franc-pieces showered from the window of the drawing-room which the General occupied.

When the agitation had reached these proportions, and money was thus scattered broadcast, it was naturally joined by every form of discontent. From this point of view the total absence of political programme with which it commenced, far from being a weakness, was a source of strength. If M. Boulanger had been a personality, if Boulangism had represented an idea, opposite parties could not have allied themselves to the movement. But the successful protest against the actual Government was full of ambiguity. Each party hoped to profit by the attack on those in power. Ardent Catholics, Socialists of the most violent type, Republicans, Royalists, Bonapartists, all hoped to utilise it. From this point of view there would be a certain advantage in replacing the party leader by a figure-head ; though he says very little, even in the few words he utters there is risk of compromising the alliance of these contradictory hopes.

For it must be noted that Boulangism represents nothing but the hatred of that which exists. Its formula—revision, dissolution—expresses but two ideas : a change in the Constitution, and an expulsion of the members of the present Chamber. But in what direction is the change to be made ? Who is to profit by this expulsion ? Were these questions answered there would be an immediate division in the camp. The little that is added—a strong executive, the *plébiscite*—are but the formulas of every despotic government.

After the man, and the organisation, we pass on to consider

the composition of the party. Behind the staff, which is of small importance, is the army ; and in the van the Roman Church, whose riches and power are alike threatened by the Republic, whose doctrine of authority and whose interests attach her to despotic governments, and who recognised her champion from the first, even while he yet wore the Radical colours. The whole clergy, burning with a suppressed and for years an impotent hatred of the democracy, felt a thrill of hope at the sight of the General's plume and sabre.

The Monarchists, the allies of the Church, follow with more hesitation. But their electoral following, especially in the country, has already declared for M. Boulanger, and the chiefs must follow perforce. Besides, the Monarchists have already given proof of their weakness ; for the last two years they have been seeking an alliance, convinced that alone they can make no breach in the Republic. They tried M. Ferry, and the attempt failed. M. Boulanger holds out a helping hand. Either of their own motion or as the result of secret negotiations, the pretenders themselves are the keenest Boulangists of their party. Though Bonapartists were easily won it is doubtful if the Royalists would have followed without the distinct declarations of Philippe VII.

At the other extremity of the scale some members of the anarchical and revolutionary classes enter also into the movement. These are they who have nothing to hope but from a general overthrow, and they hope to profit by the agitation aroused by M. Boulanger.

But the strength of the movement lies in the great body of the discontented, from the politician disappointed of office to the unsatisfied place-hunter ; from the merchant who finds the times are bad to the under-paid clerk who cannot make two ends meet on his meagre salary, and to the workman who does not see the dawn of the new era on which his hopes are set. To all these this enterprise which makes so much stir brings change, and hope for the unknown future.

All these circumstances account for the rise and growth

of this great movement in spite of the fact that M. Boulanger is not a remarkable personage. It has sprung from the general discontent and from an enormous system of advertising. The last element has been especially effective; our century is the age of advertising. Besiege by means of bank notes the eyes and ears of the public with a resounding name in favour of a new species of rouge, or a new chocolate, and your bank notes will increase. Our epoch is changing the face of the world by lending charlatans the unlimited strength of millions. It is well known that a manufacturer made a colossal fortune by selling as a universal remedy lentil flour called by a strange name. The advertisement which meets the eye at every turn, ends by sinking into the brain. No doubt no one believes in it at first, but when the sick man suffers and finds scientific medicine of no avail, pain, and some lingering hope recall to his mind the quack remedy whose specious promises fill columns of all the newspapers, and are displayed on all the hoardings. Lentil flour has nothing to do with this success. Human credulity and the power of advertising are more than sufficient. In the same way there was no necessity for M. Boulanger to be either hero or genius; he represents the lentil flour. France, weary and irritated, has quarrelled with her doctors, and allowed herself to be tempted by a quack medicine.

I have left on one side that which is the principal object of the researches of the police. Are the promoters of Boulangism prepared, in case of need, to use violent means, which hitherto do not seem to have been absolutely distasteful to them; or do they draw the line at the attempt to traffic in the liberties of the French democracy?

There is no doubt, however, that at the present day M. Boulanger's remarkable prestige has considerably diminished; the question is how far the strength of Boulangism has diminished with it. It is certain that the parties united in his name do not even pretend to think highly of him. The popular hero of the early days is no more: he is now used as an engine of war

against the actual state of things. The contrast between the startling unanimity of the voters and the total absence of enthusiasm was the strangest and most novel characteristic of the last election in Paris.

Could this continue we might augur ill for the future of France. I have already said that it is rash to prophesy. But in whatever form imagination pictures future events it is impossible to see how M. Boulanger's even transient success could be other than disastrous to the country. As this success would be due to conflicting forms of discontent, and to irreconcileable hopes, the exercise of power must needs deprive this mediocre Cæsar of half his partisans. There is no risk of mistake in asserting that it is impossible to satisfy the rich classes and the inhabitants of the rural districts who are the partisans of monarchy and at the same time to content the revolutionary artisans. On the other hand, Boulangism has become the formula of all discontented interests: and M. Boulanger has no talisman for finding surplus millions in the budget or for reviving prosperity. We may therefore confidently predict that if M. Boulanger and his friends attain to power, the vast majority of those who helped him to rise will very soon feel towards him that double-distilled wrath of crowds who have been disappointed and believe themselves deceived, and whose bitterness against their favourites of yesterday is exasperated not only by their present deception but by their past idolatry.

Those must have little knowledge of M. Boulanger and his intimates who imagine that they would meet this revulsion of the popular feeling with resignation. The new master would not hesitate to strike those who had raised him to power if he found himself threatened by them. And since he could find support neither in the popularity which he had forfeited, nor in the hereditary prestige of the monarchical families which he never possessed, his only chance would be in some desperate move in which he would stake the very existence of his country.

We can only watch events as they occur with the deepest

anxiety. It is a fatal mistake, and one whose punishment is sure, for a country to abandon herself to despotic power even though the ruler be a man of genius. The danger is greater when the country yields to an average man.

I have endeavoured to analyse as far as I can the currents which have borne M. Boulanger along like drift-wood in the ocean. But what strikes the public is his success. People say, "Everything serves him, even to his very faults." How is it possible he should not say so himself? How can he fail to believe in his star? After such a marvellous career he cannot help feeling a blind faith in his good luck and in his own inspirations.

A man who won enormous sums ten times running at Monaco must of necessity go on to his ruin, because he could never divest himself of the belief that fortune favoured him. He cannot tear himself from the tables, and when he first begins to lose he doubles his stakes in the firm conviction that his original luck will return, and, giddy with excitement, he continues to play as long as he has a halfpenny left to stake. Gambling is the most terrible of all forms of intoxication. Confidence in a run of luck is a most fatal confidence. Effort and reason are abandoned as useless, chance works and thinks instead. Assuredly it would be a great danger for France, already in a difficult economical and financial position, and menaced by the European situation, to be thrown like a stake on the green table of history by an adventurer drunken with success.

Happily these dangers are imaginary. There may be moments of discontent or of unreasoning enthusiasm, but at the critical hour which shall decide her fate France will awake to the knowledge of her truer self.

CAMILLE PELLETAN.

AFTER THE PLAY.

THE play was not over when the curtain fell, four months ago, it was continued in a supplementary act or epilogue which took place immediately afterwards. "Come home to tea," Florentia said to certain friends who had stopped to speak to her in the lobby of the little theatre in Soho—they had been present at a day-performance by the company of the Théâtre Libre, transferred for a week from Paris; and three of these—Auberon and Dorriforth, accompanying Amicia—turned up so expeditiously that the change of scene had the effect of being neatly executed. The short afterpiece—it was in truth very slight—began with Amicia's entrance and her declaration that she would never again go to an afternoon performance: it was such a horrid relapse into the real to find it staring at you through the ugly daylight on coming out of the blessed fictive world.

DORRIFORTH. Ah, you touch there on one of the minor sorrows of life. That's an illustration of the general change that comes to pass in us as we grow older, if we have ever loved the stage: the fading of the glamour and the mystery that surround it.

AUBERON. Do you call it a minor sorrow? It's one of the greatest. And nothing can mitigate it.

AMICIA. Wouldn't it be mitigated a little if the stage were a trifle better? You must remember how that has changed.

AUBERON. Never, never: it's the same old stage. The change is in ourselves.

FLORENTIA. Well, I never would have given an evening to what we have just seen. If one could have put it in between luncheon and tea, well enough. But one's evenings are too precious.

DORRIFORTH. Note that—it's very important.

FLORENTIA. I mean too precious for that sort of thing.

AUBERON. Then you didn't sit spellbound by the little history of the Duc d'Enghien?

FLORENTIA. I sat yawning. Heavens, what a piece!

AMICIA. Upon my word I liked it. The last act made me cry.

DORRIFORTH. Wasn't it a curious, interesting specimen of some of the things that are worth trying: an attempt to sail closer to the real?

AUBERON. How much closer? The fiftieth part of a point—it isn't calculable.

FLORENTIA. It was just like any other bad play—I saw no difference. It had neither a plot, nor a subject, nor dialogue, nor situations, nor scenery, nor costumes, nor acting.

AMICIA. Then it was hardly, as you say, just like any other play.

AUBERON. Florentia said like any other *bad* one. The only way it differed seemed to be that it was bad in theory as well as in fact.

AMICIA. It's a *morceau de vie*, as the French say.

AUBERON. Oh, don't begin on the French!

AMICIA. It's a French experiment—que voulez-vous?

AUBERON. English experiments will do.

DORRIFORTH. No doubt they would—if there were any. But I don't see them.

AMICIA. Fortunately: think what some of them might be! Though Florentia saw nothing I saw many things in this poor little shabby *Duc d'Enghien*, coming over to our roaring London, where the dots have to be so big on the i's, with its barely audible note of originality. It appealed to me, touched me,

offered me a poignant suggestion of the way things happen in life.

AUBERON. In life they happen clumsily, stupidly, meanly. One goes to the theatre just for the refreshment of seeing them happen in another way—in symmetrical, satisfactory form, with unmistakable effect and just at the right moment.

DORRIFORTH. It shows how the same cause may produce the most diverse consequences. In this truth lies the only hope of art.

AUBERON. Oh, art, art—don't talk about art!

AMICIA. Mercy, we must talk about something!

DORRIFORTH. Auberon hates generalisations. Nevertheless I make bold to say that we go to the theatre in the same spirit in which we read a novel, some of us to find one thing and some to find another; and according as we look for the particular thing we find it.

AUBERON. That's a profound remark.

FLORENTIA. We go to find amusement: that, surely, is what we all go for.

AMICIA. There's such a diversity in our idea of amusement.

AUBERON. Don't you give people more ideas than they have?

DORRIFORTH. Ah, one must do that or one couldn't talk about them. We go to be interested; to be absorbed, beguiled and to lose ourselves, to give ourselves up, in short, to a charm.

FLORENTIA. And the charm is the strange, the extraordinary.

AMICIA. Ah, speak for yourself! The charm is the recognition of what we know, what we feel.

DORRIFORTH. See already how you differ. What we surrender ourselves to is the touch of nature, the sense of life.

AMICIA. The first thing is to believe.

FLORENTIA. The first thing, on the contrary, is to *dis*believe.

AUBERON. Lord, listen to them!

DORRIFORTH. The first thing is to follow—to care.

FLORENTIA. I read a novel, I go to the theatre, to forget.

AMICIA. To forget what?

FLORENTIA. To forget life: to throw myself into something more beautiful, more exciting: into fable and romance.

DORRIFORTH. The attraction of fable and romance is that it's about *us*, about you and me—or people whose power to suffer and to enjoy is the same as ours. In other words, we *live* their experience, for the time, and that's hardly escaping from life.

FLORENTIA. I'm not at all particular as to what you call it. Call it an escape from the common, the prosaic, the immediate.

DORRIFORTH. You couldn't put it better. That's the life that art, with Auberon's permission, gives us; that's the distinction it confers. This is why the greatest commonness is when our guide turns out a vulgar fellow—the angel, as we had supposed him, who has taken us by the hand. Then what becomes of our escape?

FLORENTIA. It's precisely then that I complain of him. He leads us into foul and dreary places—into flat and foolish deserts.

DORRIFORTH. He leads us into his own mind, his own vision of things: that's the only place into which the poet *can* lead us. It's there that he finds *As You Like It*, it is there that he finds *Comus*, or *The Way of the World*, or the Christmas pantomime. It is when he betrays us, after he has got us in and locked the door, when he can't keep from us that we are in a bare little hole and that there are no pictures on the walls, it is then that the immediate and the foolish overwhelm us.

AMICIA. That's what I liked in the piece we have been looking at. There was an artistic intention, and the little room wasn't bare: there was sociable company in it. The actors were very humble aspirants, they were common——

AUBERON. Ah, when the French give their mind to that——!

AMICIA. Nevertheless they struck me as recruits to an interesting cause, which as yet (the house was so empty) could

confer neither money nor glory. They had the air, poor things, of working for love.

AUBERON. For love of what?

AMICIA. Of the whole little enterprise—the idea of the Théâtre Libre.

FLORENTIA. Gracious, what you see in things! Don't you suppose they were paid?

AMICIA. I know nothing about it. I liked their shabbiness—they had only what was indispensable in the way of dress and scenery. That often pleases me: the imagination, in certain cases, is more finely persuaded by the little than by the much.

DORRIFORTH. I see what Amicia means.

FLORENTIA. I'll warrant you do, and a great deal more beside.

DORRIFORTH. When the appointments are meagre and sketchy the responsibility that rests upon the actors becomes a still more serious thing, and the spectator's observation of the way they rise to it a pleasure more intense. The face and the voice are more to the purpose than acres of painted canvas, and a touching intonation, a vivid gesture or two, than an army of supernumeraries.

AUBERON. Why not have everything—the face, the voice, the touching intonations, the vivid gestures, the acres of painted canvas, *and* the army of supernumeraries? Why not use bravely and intelligently every resource of which the stage disposes? What else was Richard Wagner's great theory, in producing his operas at Bayreuth?

DORRIFORTH. Why not, indeed? That would be the ideal. To have the picture complete at the same time the figures do their part in producing the particular illusion required—what a perfection and what a joy! I know no answer to that save the aggressive, objectionable fact. Simply look at the stage of to-day and observe that these two branches of the matter never do happen to go together. There is evidently a corrosive

principle in the large command of machinery and decorations—a germ of perversion and corruption. It gets the upper hand—it becomes the master. It is so much less easy to get good actors than good scenery and to represent a situation by the delicacy of personal art than by "building it in" and having everything real. Surely there is no reality worth a farthing, on the stage, but what the actor gives, and only when he has learnt his business up to the hilt need he concern himself with his material accessories. He hasn't a decent respect for his art unless he be ready to render his part as if the whole illusion depended on that alone and the accessories didn't exist. The acting is everything or it's nothing. It ceases to be everything as soon as something else becomes very important. This is the case, to-day, on the London stage: something else *is* very important. The public have been taught to consider it so: the clever machinery has ended by operating as a bribe and a blind. Their sense of the rest of the matter has gone to the dogs, as you may perceive when you hear a couple of occupants of the stalls talking, in a tone that excites your curiosity, about a performance that's "splendid."

AMICIA. Do you ever hear the occupants of the stalls talking? Never, in the *entr'actes*, have I detected, on their lips, a criticism or a comment.

DORRIFORTH. Oh, they say "splendid"—distinctly! But a question or two reveals that their reference is vague: they don't themselves know whether they mean the art of the actor or that of the stage-carpenter.

AUBERON. Isn't that confusion a high result of taste? Isn't it what's called a feeling for the *ensemble?* The artistic effect, as a whole, is so welded together that you can't pick out the parts.

DORRIFORTH. Precisely; that's what it is in the best cases and some examples are wonderfully clever.

FLORENTIA. Then what fault do you find?

DORRIFORTH. Simply this—that the whole is a pictorial whole, not a dramatic one. There is something indeed that you

can't pick out, for the very good reason that—in any serious sense of the word—it isn't there.

FLORENTIA. The public has taste, then, if it recognises and delights in a fine picture.

DORRIFORTH. I never said it hadn't, so far as that goes. The public likes to be amused, and small blame to it. It isn't very particular about the means, but it has rather a preference for amusements that it believes to be "improving," other things being equal. I don't think it's either very intelligent or at all opinionated, the dear old public: it takes humbly enough what is given it and it doesn't cry for the moon. It has an idea that fine scenery is an appeal to its nobler part and that it shows a nice critical sense in preferring it to poor. That's a real intellectual flight, for the public.

AUBERON. Bless me, its preference is right, and why isn't that a perfectly legitimate state of things?

DORRIFORTH. Why isn't it? It distinctly is! Good scenery and poor acting are better than poor scenery with the same sauce. Only it becomes then another matter: we are no longer talking about the drama.

AUBERON. Very likely that's the future of the drama, in London—an immense elaboration of the picture.

DORRIFORTH. My dear fellow, you take the words out of my mouth. An immense elaboration of the picture and an immense sacrifice of everything else: it would take very little more to persuade me that that will be the only formula of our children. It's all right, when once we have buried our dead. I have no doubt that the scenic part of the art, wonderful as some of its achievements already appear to us, is only in its infancy, and that we are destined to see wonders done that we now but faintly conceive. The probable extension of the mechanical arts is infinite. "Built in," forsooth! We shall see castles and cities and mountains and rivers built in. Everything points that way; especially the constitution of the contemporary multitude. It is huge and good-natured and common. It likes big, unmistakable, knock-

down effects; it likes to get its money back in palpable, computable change. It's in a tremendous hurry, squeezed together, with a sort of generalised gape, and the last thing it expects of you is that you will spin things fine. You can't portray a character, alas, or even, vividly, any sort of human figure, unless, in some degree, you do that. Therefore the theatre, inevitably accommodating itself, will be at last a landscape without figures. I mean, of course, without figures that count. There will be little illustrations of costume stuck about—dressed mannikins; but they'll have nothing to say: they won't even go through the form of speech.

AMICIA. What a hideous prospect!

DORRIFORTH. Not necessarily, for we shall have grown used to it: we shall, as I say, have buried our dead. To-day it's cruel, because our old ideals are only dying, they are *in extremis*, they are virtually defunct, but they are above ground—we trip and stumble on them. We shall eventually lay them tidily away. This is a bad moment, because it's a moment of transition, and we still *miss* the old superstition, the bravery of execution, the eloquence of the lips, the interpretation of character. We miss these things, of course, in proportion as the ostensible occasion for them is great; we miss them particularly, for instance, when the curtain rises on Shakspeare. Then we are conscious of a certain divine dissatisfaction, of a yearning for that which isn't. But we shall have got over this discomfort on the day when we have accepted the ostensible occasion as merely and frankly ostensible, and the real one as having nothing to do with it.

FLORENTIA. I don't follow you. As I'm one of the squeezed, gaping public, I must be dense and vulgar. You do, by the way, immense injustice to that body. They do care for character—care much for it. Aren't they perpetually talking about the actor's conception of it?

DORRIFORTH. Dear lady, what better proof can there be of their ineptitude, and that painted canvas and real water are the

only things they understand? The vanity of wasting time over that!

AUBERON. Over what?

DORRIFORTH. The actor's conception of a part. It's the refuge of observers who are no observers and critics who are no critics. With what on earth have we to do save his execution?

FLORENTIA. I don't in the least agree with you.

AMICIA. Are you very sure, my poor Dorriforth?

AUBERON. Give him rope and he'll hang himself.

DORRIFORTH. It doesn't need any great license to ask who in the world holds in his bosom the sacred secret of the right conception. All the actor can do is to give us *his*. We must take that one for granted, we make him a present of it. He must impose his conception upon us——

AUBERON. (*interrupting.*) I thought you said we accepted it.

DORRIFORTH. Impose it upon our *attention*, clever Auberon. It is because we accept his idea that he must repay us by making it vivid, by showing us how valuable it is. We give him a watch: he must show us what time it keeps. He winds it up, that is he executes the conception, and his execution is what we criticise, if we are so moved. Can anything be more absurd than to hear people discussing the conception of a part of which the execution doesn't exist—the idea of a character which never arrives at form? Think what it is, that form, as an accomplished actor may give it to us, and admit that we have enough to do to hold him to this particular honour.

AUBERON. Do you mean to say you don't think some conceptions are better than some others?

DORRIFORTH. Most assuredly, some are better: the proof of the pudding is in the eating. The best are those which yield the most points, which have the largest face; those, in other words, that are the most demonstrable, or, in other words still, the most actable. The most intelligent performer is he who recognises most surely this "actable" and distinguishes in it the more from the less. But we are so far from being in possession of a sub-

jective pattern to which we have a right to hold him that he is entitled directly to contradict any such absolute by presenting us with different versions of the same text, each completely coloured, completely consistent with itself. Every actor in whom the artistic life is strong must often feel the challenge to do that. I should never think, for instance, of contesting an actress's right to represent Lady Macbeth as a charming, insinuating woman, if she really sees the figure that way. I may be surprised at such a vision; but so far from being scandalized, I am positively thankful for the extension of knowledge, of pleasure, that she is able to open to me.

AUBERON. A reading, as they say, either commends itself to one's sense of truth or it doesn't. In the one case——

DORRIFORTH. In the one case I recognise, even—or especially—when the presumption may have been against the particular attempt, a consummate illustration of what art can do. In the other I moralize indulgently upon human rashness.

FLORENTIA. You have an assurance *à toute épreuve;* but you are deplorably superficial. There is a whole group of plays and a whole category of acting to which your generalizations quite fail to apply.—Help me, Auberon.

AUBERON. You're easily exhausted. I suppose she means that it's far from true everywhere that the scenery is everything. It may be true—I don't say it is!—of two or three good-natured playhouses in London. It isn't true—how can it be?—of the provincial theatres or of the others in the capital. Put it even that they would be all scenery if they could; they can't, poor things—so they have to provide acting.

DORRIFORTH. They have to, fortunately; but what do we hear of it?

FLORENTIA. How do you mean, what do we hear of it?

DORRIFORTH. In what trumpet of fame does it reach us? They do what they can, the performers Auberon alludes to, and they are brave souls. But I am speaking of the conspicuous cases, of the exhibitions that draw.

FLORENTIA. There is good acting that draws ; one could give you names and places.

DORRIFORTH. I have already guessed those you mean. But when it isn't too much a matter of the paraphernalia it is too little a matter of the play. A play now-a-days is a rare bird. I should like to see one.

FLORENTIA. There are lots of them, all the while—the newspapers talk about them. People talk about them at dinners.

DORRIFORTH. What do they say about them ?

FLORENTIA. The newspapers ?

DORRIFORTH. No, I don't care for them. The people at dinners.

FLORENTIA. Oh, they don't say anything in particular.

DORRIFORTH. Doesn't that seem to show the effort isn't very suggestive ?

AMICIA. The conversation at dinners certainly isn't.

DORRIFORTH. I mean our contemporary drama. To begin with, you can't find it—there's no text.

FLORENTIA. No text ?

AUBERON. So much the better !

DORRIFORTH. So much the better if there is to be no criticism. There is only a dirty prompter's book. One can't put one's hand upon it ; one doesn't know what one is discussing. There is no "authority"—nothing is ever published.

AMICIA. The pieces wouldn't bear that.

DORRIFORTH. It would be a small ordeal to resist—if there were anything in them. Look at the novels !

AMICIA. The text is the French *brochure*. The "adaptation" is unprintable.

DORRIFORTH. That's where it's so wrong. It ought at least to be as good as the original.

AUBERON. Aren't there some "rights" to protect—some risk of the play being stolen if it's published ?

DORRIFORTH. There may be—I don't know. Doesn't

that only prove how little important we regard the drama as being, and how little seriously we take it, if we won't even trouble ourselves to bring about decent civil conditions for its existence? What have we to do with the French *brochure?* how does that help us to represent our own life, our manners, our customs, our ideas, our English types, our English world? Such a field for comedy, for tragedy, for portraiture, for satire, as they all make—such subjects as they would yield! Think of London alone—what a matchless hunting ground for the satirist—the most magnificent that ever was. If the occasion always produced the man London would have produced an Aristophanes. But somehow it doesn't.

FLORENTIA. Oh, types and ideas, Aristophanes and satire—!

DORRIFORTH. I'm too ambitious, you mean? I shall presently show you that I'm not ambitious at all. Everything makes against that—I am only reading the signs.

AUBERON. The plays are arranged to be as English as possible: they are altered, they are fitted.

DORRIFORTH. Fitted? Indeed they are, and to the capacity of infants. They are in too many cases made vulgar, puerile, barbarous. They are neither fish nor flesh, and with all the point that's left out and all the *naïveté* that's put in, they cease to place before us any coherent appeal or any recognizable society.

AUBERON. They often make good plays to act, all the same.

DORRIFORTH. They may; but they don't make good plays to see or to hear. The theatre consists of two things, *que diable*—of the stage and the drama, and I don't see how you can have it unless you have both, or how you can have either unless you have the other. They are the two blades of a pair of scissors.

AUBERON. You are very unfair to native talent. There are lots of *strictly original* plays——

AMICIA. Yes, they put that expression on the posters.

AUBERON. I don't know what they put on the posters; but the plays are written and acted—produced with great success.

DORRIFORTH. Produced—partly. A play isn't fully produced until it is in a form in which you can refer to it. We have to talk in the air. I can refer to my Congreve, but I can't to my Pinero.

FLORENTIA. The authors are not bound to publish them if they don't wish.

DORRIFORTH. Certainly not, nor are they in that case bound to insist on one's not being a little vague about them. They are perfectly free to withhold them; they may have very good reasons for it, and I can imagine some that would be excellent and worthy of all respect. But their withholding them is one of the signs.

AUBERON. What signs?

DORRIFORTH. Those I just spoke of—those we are trying to read together. The signs that ambition and desire are folly, that the sun of the drama has set, that the matter isn't worth talking about, that it has ceased to be an interest for serious folk, and that everything—everything, I mean, that's anything—is over. The sooner we recognize it the sooner to sleep, the sooner we get clear of misleading illusions and are purged of the bad blood that disappointment makes. It's a pity, because the theatre—after every allowance is made—*might* have been a fine thing. At all events it was a pleasant—it was really almost a noble—dream. *Requiescat!*

FLORENTIA. I see nothing to confirm your absurd theory. I delight in the play; more people than ever delight in it with me; more people than ever go to it, and there are ten theatres in London where there were two of old.

DORRIFORTH. Which is what was to be demonstrated. Whence do they derive their nutriment?

AUBERON. Why, from the enormous public.

DORRIFORTH. My dear fellow, I'm not talking of the box-office. What wealth of dramatic, of histrionic production have we, to meet that enormous demand? There will be twenty theatres ten years hence where there are ten to-day, and there

will be, no doubt, ten times as many people "delighting in them,' like Florentia. But it won't alter the fact that our dream will have been dreamt. Florentia said a word when we came in which alone speaks volumes.

FLORENTIA. What was my word?

AUBERON. You are sovereignly unjust to native talent among the actors—I leave the dramatists alone. There are many who do excellent, independent work; strive for perfection, completeness—in short, the things we want.

DORRIFORTH. I am not in the least unjust to them—I only pity them: they have so little to put *sous la dent*. It must seem to them at times that no one will work for them, that they are likely to starve for parts—forsaken of gods and men.

FLORENTIA. If they work, then, in solitude and sadness, they have the more honour, and one should recognise more explicitly their great merit.

DORRIFORTH. Admirably said. Their laudable effort is precisely the one little loophole that I see of escape from the general doom. Certainly we must try to enlarge it—that small aperture into the blue. We must fix our eyes on it and make much of it, exaggerate it, do anything with it that may contribute to restore a working faith. Precious that must be to the sincere spirits on the stage who are conscious of all the other things—formidable things—that rise against them.

AMICIA. What other things do you mean?

DORRIFORTH. Why, for one thing, the grossness and brutality of London, with its scramble, its pressure, its hustle of engagements, of preoccupations, its long distances, its late hours, its nightly dinners, its innumerable demands on the attention, its general congregation of influences fatal to the isolation, to the punctuality, to the security, of the dear old playhouse spell. When Florentia said in her charming way——

FLORENTIA. Here's my dreadful speech at last.

DORRIFORTH. When you said that you went to the Théâtre Libre in the afternoon because you couldn't spare an evening,

I recognised the death-knell of the drama. *Time*, the very breath of its nostrils, is lacking. Wagner was clever to go to leisurely Bayreuth among the hills—the Bayreuth of spacious days, a paradise of "development." Talk to a London audience of "development"! The long runs would, if necessary, put the whole question into a nutshell. Figure to yourself, for then the question is answered, how an intelligent actor must loathe them, and what a cruel negation he must find in them of the artistic life, the life of which the very essence is variety of practice, freshness of experiment, and to feel that one must do many things in turn to do any one of them completely.

AUBERON. I don't in the least understand your *acharnement*, in view of the vagueness of your contention.

DORRIFORTH. My *acharnement* is your little joke, and my contention is a little lesson in philosophy.

FLORENTIA. I prefer a lesson in taste. I had one the other night at the "Merry Wives."

DORRIFORTH. If you come to that, so did I!

AMICIA. So she does spare an evening sometimes.

FLORENTIA. It was all extremely quiet and comfortable, and I don't in the least recognise Dorriforth's lurid picture of the dreadful conditions. There was no scenery—at least not too much; there was just enough, and it was very pretty, and it was in its place.

DORRIFORTH. And what else was there?

FLORENTIA. There was very good acting.

AMICIA. I also went, and I thought it all, for a sportive, wanton thing, quite painfully ugly.

AUBERON. Uglier than that ridiculous black room, with the invisible people groping about in it, of your precious *Duc d'Enghien?*

DORRIFORTH. The black room is doubtless not the last word of art, but it struck me as a successful application of a happy idea. The contrivance was perfectly simple—a closer night effect than is usually attempted, with a few guttering candles,

which threw high shadows over the bare walls, on the table of the court-martial. Out of the gloom came the voices and tones of the distinguishable figures, and it is perhaps a fancy of mine that it made them—given the situation, of course—more impressive and dramatic.

AUBERON. You rail against scenery, but what could belong more to the order of things extraneous to what you perhaps a little priggishly call the delicacy of personal art than the arrangement you are speaking of?

DORRIFORTH. I was talking of the abuse of scenery. I never said anything so idiotic as that the effect isn't helped by an appeal to the eye and an adumbration of the whereabouts.

AUBERON. But where do you draw the line and fix the limit? What is the exact dose?

DORRIFORTH. It's a question of taste and tact.

FLORENTIA. And did you find taste and tact in that coal-hole of the Théâtre Libre?

DORRIFORTH. Coal-hole is again your joke. I found a strong impression in it—an impression of the hurried, extemporized cross-examination, by night, of an impatient and mystified prisoner, whose dreadful fate had been determined in advance, who was to be shot, high-handedly, in the dismal dawn. The arrangement didn't worry and distract me: it was simplifying, intensifying. It gave, what a judicious *mise-en-scène* should always do, the essence of the matter, and left the embroidery to the actors.

FLORENTIA. At the "Merry Wives," where you could see your hand before your face, I could make out the embroidery.

DORRIFORTH. Could you, under Falstaff's pasteboard cheeks and the sad disfigurement of his mates? There was no excess of scenery, Auberon says. Why, Falstaff's very person was nothing *but* scenery. A false face, a false figure, false hands, false legs—scarcely a square inch on which the irrepressible humour of the rogue could break into illustrative touches. And he is so human, so expressive, of so rich a physiognomy. One would

rather Mr. Beerbohm Tree should have played the part in his own clever, elegant slimness—that would at least have represented life. A Falstaff all "make-up" is an opaque substance. This seems to me an example of what the rest still more suggested, that in dealing with a production like the "Merry Wives" really the main quality to put forward is discretion. You must resolve such a production, as a thing represented, into a tone that the imagination can take an æsthetic pleasure in. Its grossness must be transposed, as it were, to a fictive scale, a scale of fainter tints and generalized signs. A filthy, eruptive, realistic Bardolph and Pistol overlay the romantic with the literal. Relegate them and blur them, to the eye; let their blotches be constructive and their raggedness relative.

AMICIA. Ah, it was *so* ugly!

DORRIFORTH. What a pity then, after all, there wasn't more painted canvas to divert you! Ah, decidedly, the theatre of the future must be that.

FLORENTIA. Please remember your theory that our life's a scramble, and suffer me to go and dress for dinner.

HENRY JAMES.

THE HOMES OF THE PEOPLE.

ONE of our most popular English songs is "Home, Sweet Home." The most lovable word in our language is "home," and English home life is held up as a pattern to other countries. The little cottage in the country, with its well-kept garden, or the large country house with its park, are ideal homes; and perhaps even the suburban villa and the smart town house may be given the same endearing title. But in the back streets of our large cities, what a mockery it would be to hear the familiar words—"There's no place like home!" And could anyone truthfully say "Sweet Home!" A dirty, untidy-looking woman with several dirty children clinging to her tattered skirt, once said to me when I asked, "Do you like this filthy room?" "No, sir, I don't like it; but I suppose it is good enough for the like of us." At that moment I heard a barrel organ in the distance grinding out the strains of the old home song. Leaving the six-roomed tenement house with its six families, I turned down the back street, and at the corner saw a brilliantly lighted, clean-looking public-house and through the half-open door came sounds of hearty laughter. Outside there were factory girls with big hats and frizzled fringes, romping with their youthful lovers, and inside men and women enjoying light, warmth, and excitement, which they can get nowhere else. "Home, Sweet Home," sings the barrel organ, and above the music a hoarse voice is heard inside calling out, "Two pennorth o' gin, please."

"The Homes of the People" is unfortunately rather a mournful topic, and by some people considered stale. It would be

difficult to write anything new, but I will do my best to keep sentiment in the background and only bring forward points most worthy of practical consideration. In considering the homes of the people, their condition of life must not be lost sight of. A short time ago, I, with others, endeavoured to persuade the Government to undertake a thorough inquiry into the poverty which unfortunately has reached during the last few years an acute stage throughout many districts of the Metropolis. A ridiculous sort of census was taken which was untrustworthy, and of no value; but what the Government failed to do has been partially done since with wonderful success by private individuals. It would be difficult, in my opinion, to overrate the value of the reports which have been published by Mr Booth respecting the inhabitants of the Tower Hamlets and by Mr. Valpy on the people in Central London. Both have adopted the same means for inquiry and the same classifications. In attempting to come to any decision on social problems it is necessary to subdivide the poorer classes of the community. This is generally overlooked, and we constantly hear from platforms and in the House of Commons, model dwellings for the industrial classes alluded to as the homes of the "poor," and in the minds of the speakers the word "poor" has the most hazy meaning. This mistake should be steadily avoided. The problem is not so much how to decently house wage-earners above the line of poverty—although much still remains to be done for them—but rather how to accommodate the thousands below that line. I will accept the classifications of Messrs. Booth and Valpy, which are as follow: 1st, the lowest class, comprising criminals, loafers, and occasional labourers; 2nd, casual earners, (these two classes comprise the very poor); 3rd, intermittent earners; 4th, small regular earners. These last two comprise the poor. Next to the very poor and poor come the three classes of regular standard earners; of high class labour who may be called the comfortable; and of the lower class who may be called the comparatively

well-to-do. For these last three classes, model dwellings are springing up; but for the first four classes nothing much has hitherto been done.

Mr. Booth's inquiry was carried out through Whitechapel, St. George's-in-the-East, Stepney, Mile End, and Poplar, and he gives us the following percentages for the population in those districts: 1st, lowest class comprises 1½ per cent.; 2nd, casual earners, over 11 per cent.; 3rd, intermittent earners, 7½ per cent.; 4th, small regular earners, 15 per cent. In Central London, comprising Westminster (Soho and St. James), the Strand, St. Giles, St. George's, Bloomsbury, the percentages are, according to Mr. Valpy: 1st, lowest class, 1½ per cent.; 2nd, casual earners, nearly 14 per cent.; 3rd, intermittent earners, 6½ per cent.; 4th, small regular earners, 5 per cent. We have therefore, in the Tower Hamlets, 33 per cent., and in Central London, about 27 per cent. of the population who form the poor and the very poor. As regards wages, class 1 does not contain wage-earners, for if they do not steal they fight with starvation by doing an odd job here, there, and anywhere. In class 2 are the poorer costermongers and hawkers, with an average wage of 10s. or 12s. a week, and many dock labourers, who follow such an uncertain employment that their average wage is about 8s. or 9s. a week. Classes 3 and 4 have a bare income of 16s. to 21s. per week, and it must be remembered that sickness, slackness of trade, or any accident would send many of these into class 2. I do not wish it to be thought that sufficient has yet been done for those who can more easily afford the high rents of model dwellings. But all the evils to which I shall now allude affect to a still greater extent the poorer portion of Londoners. It may be said that the evils are already well known. We are all aware to what an extent the public mind was excited by *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London;* how that excitement was partially allayed by a Royal Commission, and a subsequent Act of Parliament, and how since then social questions have been overshadowed by the heated controversy between the two great political

parties. Nothing is more extraordinary in our English life than the thirst of the public for a fresh excitement. A subject is taken up; everyone professes to be wildly in favour of something being done, and then it is as suddenly put out of sight and forgotten. The terrible evidence published in the voluminous Report of the Royal Commission was read by few, and is remembered by a still smaller number. The word "overcrowding" was in everyone's mouth; but beyond the good work done by the Mansion House Council and a certain amount of activity shown by a few Vestries, no great result has been obtained in order to prevent that overcrowding. It must be remembered that the evil is not only the overcrowding of people in one house, but also the overcrowding of the houses themselves. Blocks of dwellings were built years ago with vacant places in the centre necessary for light, air, and ventilation; and then by means of a narrow entrance cut through one house the vacant land inside was afterwards covered with smaller houses, to the detriment of all the inhabitants. The idea that has been followed in many parts of London has been to obtain a maximum of lodging accommodation with a minimum of air and light. Sunshine is not so superabundant in our foggy Metropolis to allow, as in some foreign cities, the houses being built so that their upper storeys seem nearly to touch. Of all cities in the world, London is most in need of breathing spaces, and yet in its numerous courts and alleys, air seems by the ingenuity of jerry-builders to have been carefully and intentionally excluded. A few years ago, with an official kindly placed at my disposal by the French Ministry of the Interior, I visited all the poor districts of Paris. In most of the districts where the working classes live, their rooms look out on a broad boulevard, which is often planted with lines of trees. I had come fresh from London slums, with all the horrors of insanitary or tumble-down houses impressed upon my brain, and I could not believe that in the much less wealthy city of Paris, the poorest toiler is lodged like a prince in comparison with many of our highly skilled

mechanics. There, for the loafers who eke out a wretched existence around the Halles, special lodgings are provided, scrupulously clean, well ventilated, and admirably managed; and I confess I thought with shame of the wretched lodging-houses and miserable tenements of the loafers in our markets.

In certain areas in London, the land is completely covered with a network of houses, where will be found thousands of our poor packed closely together, and families existing—it cannot be termed living—eating, and sleeping in one small dark room. I will leave to the imagination of the reader a birth or a death under such circumstances. Only the other day I was told of a room with a dead child on a heap of rags in one corner, several living children huddled together in another, and the wretched mother momentarily expecting her confinement on a dirty mattress in another. Will anyone venture to say that the sin of immorality will be visited by future punishment on those who exist under such circumstances? Will it not rather be laid to the door of those who take no trouble to remove causes which must inevitably tend to immorality? It has always seemed to me that it is one of the many wonderful miracles which we see daily taking place around us, that the greater number of even our poorest children come out of such a deteriorating environment honest men and pure women. The Royal Commissioners bore witness to this, and in their Report stated that they found "that the standard of morality in these crowded quarters is higher than might be expected, looking at the surroundings in which their lives are passed." Lord Shaftesbury's evidence on the one-room system was to the point. He said: "The effect of the one-room system is physically and morally beyond all description. In the first place, the one-room system always leads, as far as I have seen, to the one-bed system." Many cases of overcrowding existed at that time and still exist. In Spitalfields one house of nine rooms was reported as containing an average of seven persons in each room, and in no room more than one bed. Evidence was

also given that in some cases closets were used as sleeping places by the homeless poor, and in houses down back streets where the lock of the front door had been broken, staircases and passages were, and still are, used for sleeping and for immoral purposes. Then we also have in the Report a general consensus of opinion as to the physical deterioration of dwellers in overcrowded districts, which shows not only in themselves but unfortunately in their children. This is not a case of "the sins of the fathers being visited on the children," but rather the sins of the country being visited on the country by the fact of half-useless citizens being born into the world. Infantile mortality was stated to be very large, and in St. Luke's, ophthalmia, with the local cognomen of "the blight," was very prevalent. But there is a huge amount of suffering besides sickness. A Board of Health Inquiry some years ago ascertained that upon the lowest average in overcrowded districts, every workman or workwoman lost about twenty days in the year from simple exhaustion. It is the usual custom to attribute poverty and disease to intemperance, particularly by those who will not move a finger or stir a step to help in any way Temperance legislative reforms. I am convinced that many of those who take to drink have been induced to take the first step by the condition of the houses in which they live. If the wealthy ever feel exhausted they take a glass of wine. The workman or workwoman who loses twenty days in the year from simple exhaustion often keep themselves going by a glass of spirits at the public-house. I know, of course, that drink causes many to drift into the classes of the poor and very poor, but intemperance is not only the cause, but also the consequence of overcrowding. It is not easy to arrive at any conclusion as to actual waste of life through overcrowding. The death-rates prove but little, and this is shown by that fearful sentence in the Report from which I have already largely quoted, "the very poor die comparatively seldom in their homes." In London, one out of every five of this class dies in the hospital, workhouse, or the prison. In Mr. Hayward's

interesting report on "the dwellings of the poor," written some years ago, I find a careful comparison of deaths in a poor district with those in a wealthier one. Taking one parish, he states that in the neighbourhood of Drury-lane and Seven Dials two die for every one in the locality of Bedford-square. In 1882, in a small number of buildings in St. Pancras, the death-rate reached 70·1 per thousand, and in Wellington-square, which was supposed to belong to a member of the St. Pancras Vestry, the rate was over 53 per thousand. Having stated some of the evils caused by insanitary and overcrowded dwellings, I will now allude to a few of the most prominent causes for what must be considered by all a most terrible state of affairs. I will only briefly touch on the subjects which belong to party politics. One of the causes is the law relative to land owning, which seems to hamper and impede well-intentioned landlords. Then, the leasehold system is much to blame, as it has completely done away with the old idea involved in the expression, "an Englishman's house is his castle." Again, in thousands of instances houses which were originally built for one family, have been turned into tenement houses with a family in almost every room, owing to the exodus of the wealthy from the populous centres. Another cause is the huge price of land, and this is one of the greatest difficulties in solving the housing problem. The price of land sold to an individual is pretty high and a company is always expected to pay more. I tremble to think what owners will expect to receive if the new London County Council wishes to become a purchaser. No arbitration is really of value whilst the present fabulous prices can be extorted through necessity. Some of the model dwellings companies have obtained land at a price lower than market value owing to the philanthropy of the owners, but this is only where the individual can afford to be a little generous. A fair price for London land would be most difficult to determine. I am afraid this last sentiment will shock those whose ideas are formulated by the narrowest teaching of some political economist. I am not now going into the question of the "unearned increment,"

but I should like shortly to place before my readers a statement of what occurred in consequence of a recommendation from the Royal Commissioners. The story of the sites of the Coldbath Fields, Millbank, and Pentonville Prisons is a strange one, both as regards the attitude taken on the subject by modern legislators, and as a proof how vain is the attempt to procure dwellings for the poor at a moderate rental. The suggestion of the Commissioners was that the prisons sites should be conveyed to the Metropolitan Board of Works in trust for the benefit of those portions of the town which are most overcrowded. In fixing the price at which the sites should be so conveyed, due regard was to be paid to the purpose for which they were required. Our present Prime Minister in his memorandum at the end of the Report gives vent to certain opinions with which for once I cordially agree. He says that "if the sites were sold at the highest market price they would no doubt be more valuable, but would be of no use whatever towards the solution of this special difficulty. On the other hand, if they are sold at cost price to some authority or trust that would build workmen's dwellings upon them, or upon other smaller sites which had been exchanged for portions of them, the result would be so far to satisfy the want under which, on account of its peculiar circumstances, the interior of London labours. The extraordinary price of land constitutes the most formidable difficulty, and by this arrangement the difficulty would be met. But then the State must be content to forego the largely increased price which it might, if it liked, obtain for the sites of these prisons." He further stated: "It is the surrender of an increase which is caused by that very concentration of population which it is to be applied to remedy." He tells us that if vast masses of the population are forced to live near the centre of the town and find no room for their dwellings, it must be remembered that the State has largely contributed to swell the population and to diminish the house room. He then informs us that the forcible destruction of dwellings authorised by Parliament has largely contributed to diminish

the aggregate of house room, and that a proposal to remedy overcrowding *for which the State is largely responsible* by utilising a gain on enhanced value of land which is due to the density of population, can hardly be eleemosynary. It more closely resembles the provision of *compensation* than the offer of a gift. I imagine that the faithful adherents of the Prime Minister would not call this proposal eleemosynary or compensatory, but decidedly socialistic. The next step was the introduction of the Bill of 1885 into the House of Lords by Lord Salisbury, and the carrying through that House of the principle laid down by him. Clause 3 contained these words : " It shall be lawful for the justices of the peace for the County of Middlesex, if the justices think fit so to do, to sell and convey those respective sites or any part or parts thereof to the Metropolitan Board of Works *at such price, to be fixed by agreement or arbitration*, as will enable the Board *without serious loss* to appropriate the sites or parts so conveyed for the purposes of the Labouring Classes Lodging Houses Acts, 1851 to 1867, as amended by this Act." The result of this would have been that the land could be acquired at less than market value, and municipal dwellings could have been built without the necessity of making a profit by them. The Conservative House of Lords passed the clause, and the Bill was sent to the House of Commons. The Whigs were at once up in arms. Mr. Albert Grey spoke with warmth of " the socialistic principles of a so-called Conservative Government," and ended one of his many speeches on the subject by saying that if the third clause were passed as it stood, it would sit like a nightmare on their souls for many and many a long day. He also threatened in Committee to fight the clause inch by inch and line by line. Mr. A. Elliot wanted the clause to be withdrawn altogether ; and the opposition, which was naturally strong among the Conservatives, was joined by such advanced men as Mr. Picton and Mr. A. Arnold. When the Bill reached the Committee stage, amendment after amendment was introduced by Lord Cross, and in a small House of under one hundred members, by majorities of fifty

the clause lost its principle and its value; and the result has been that not one house for the working class has been, or is likely to be, built on the prisons sites. Such is the true story of a legislative failure. It is, therefore, still a problem how to obtain land in London at such a price that good houses for the working classes can be erected, and moderate rents charged. High rents are inflicting grievous harm on many who would otherwise have a better chance of fighting for a more prosperous existence. There can be no doubt that the poorer a man is, the more, comparatively, he has to pay for his lodging. Everything tends to raise the workman's rent. Clearances and improvement schemes increase the competition for house room; the sub-letting of tenement houses necessitates a profit to each one in the chain of leaseholders up to the ground landlord; compulsion to live near their work raises the rent in a working class quarter; and if the man could live at a distance, perhaps his wife and daughters cannot. The migratory habits of the poorer classes, often caused by arrears of rent, and what are significantly called "runs," which mean bad debts to the rack-renter, entail upon the stationary and the punctual rent-payers an increased rent, as the rack-renter is of course the one person who must not lose a penny. All these causes, and many others, not only produce overcrowding, but also exorbitant rents.

From the report of the Royal Commission, we learn that in some of the poorer quarters of London 88 per cent. of the population pay more than one-fifth of their weekly wages in rent, the average rent of one room being about 4s.; of two-room tenements, 6s.; and of three rooms, 7s. 6d.; and it was stated that rents were rising; whilst there was no increase in the wages. I have known of unfurnished single rooms in a bad state of repair at 5s. and even 6s. a week. It would be difficult to describe the furniture in rooms let furnished. Mr. Valpy, speaking of the exorbitant rents of Soho and St. James, says that 6s. a week is a moderate rent for one room, and he adds that it

is perhaps difficult to expect a landlord to demand less rent than he knows he can get; and yet it seems very much like oppression when specially high rents are required from toilers, often poorly off, because the landlord knows that the conditions of their local trade compel them to live within a limited area. He (Mr. Valpy) sums up as the consequence of this, that many families are compelled to live and work in one room and the toilers' houses are often densely and indecently packed. Nothing, however, has caused overcrowding and high rents so much as improvements. An improvement scheme always sounds well. Part of Seven Dials, with its neglected and insanitary dwellings, is suddenly removed, and a broad street called "Shaftesbury-avenue," on either side of which theatres and public-houses are at once erected, is considered a wonderful improvement; but it is forgotten that hundreds of families have been removed, or—as it would be called in Ireland—"evicted," and although some model dwellings have been built, it is not likely that many of the displaced have gone into them. Lord Shaftesbury once described, speaking on the subject of demolitions, how the inhabitants have been seen like people in a besieged town running to and fro and not knowing where to turn. Mr. Valpy tells us that in Central London the population has largely decreased since the last census. Does anyone imagine that those who have left have found healthy accommodation in the suburbs? On the contrary, they have only moved on a little and taken refuge in the streets behind Regent-street, and the poverty of that particular locality has been thereby materially increased. So was it in the case of the building of the Law Courts, when insufficient provision was made for those displaced; and so also in Chelsea within the last year. On the Cadogan estate, in spite of the earnest protests of hundreds, cottages and filthy slums are being rapidly cleared away to make way for houses for a better class. Under the scheme, model dwellings were to be built to re-house about 700 out of nearly 4,000 displaced. Where are

those model dwellings? It is easier to say where the evicted families have found refuge, for I hear that the west of Chelsea is rapidly becoming like a rabbit warren, and those who have been working for years in surrounding districts speak of the demoralisation there owing to the influx of hundreds who lately lived within a stone's throw of where I am now writing. No wonder the Royal Commissioners stated that: "The pressure, with all its evil consequences caused by immigration, is small compared with that produced by demolition," and also that "the consequence of the displaced people moving into districts where the demand for labour is not very great, is that all are half-starved, the old inhabitants as well as the new comers." It is not too much to insist on the fact that no real improvement can be made in London, taking the Metropolis as a whole, unless due provision is made for those to be displaced *before* the improvement scheme is commenced.

It is always difficult to suggest remedies, and any real amelioration of the homes of the people must necessarily take time, but we can congratulate ourselves that London has taken a good step forward in the right direction, for it has at last a governing body directly responsible to the whole of the ratepayers, and although that body has not as yet sufficient powers under the existing law, and has no control over local authorities, yet it is evident that the bettering of the social condition of the working classes and of the poor lies in the hands of the new County Council. It is to be hoped that before long neglectful Bumbledom and self-interested Vestrydom will completely disappear, and that District Councils under the supreme authority of the County Council will take their place. It will, I think, also be found necessary in order to solve the housing question that further compulsory powers be granted, in order that the London poor may find refuge in municipal dwellings and municipal lodging-houses at rents sufficient only to repay the cost of building and of maintenance.

It may be interesting to state very briefly some of the

more important powers of the County Council. In sanitary matters the Council will have the advice of its own medical officer or officers of health. Under Lord Shaftesbury's Act for the purpose of establishing well-ordered lodging-houses for the labouring classes, land may, with the approval of one of Her Majesty's principal Secretaries of State, be purchased or rented by agreement, or may be acquired by compulsory purchase either within or without the Metropolitan area, which involves, however, a provisional order to be confirmed by Parliament. The County Council have the entire management, control, and regulation of such houses, and may make reasonable charges for the tenancy and occupation of them. It would be a hard matter to define "reasonable charges"; and it is hardly likely that the water and gas companies will make use of the power which the Act gives them to supply water and gas to these houses either without charge, or on favourable terms. Torrens' Acts deal with small areas and single houses in an unfit state for human habitation; but the Council can only act where the Vestry or Local Board, after receiving due notice, has declined or neglected to do so. Cross's Acts, on the other hand, deal with large areas. Under these Acts, if the County Council receives a report from a medical officer of health that a certain area is in an unhealthy state, and that an improvement scheme is necessary, it can prepare a scheme, and having matured it, must submit it to the Secretary of State. He must then inquire into the matter, and, if he thinks fit, make a provisional order to be confirmed by Parliament in the usual way. After the land is acquired, the Council must take steps to get the rest of the scheme executed by private persons or bodies, as it cannot do the building itself under these Acts unless it gets the consent of the Secretary of State. If it obtains this consent, it must not keep the buildings in its own hands, but must sell or dispose of them within ten years from the time of their completion. As regards the question of re-housing, the original Artisans' Dwellings Act of 1875 contained very stringent provisions for securing the accommo-

dation of all persons displaced by the carrying out of a scheme. By the amending Act of 1879, the Secretary of State may dispense with this restriction as to a locality whenever equally convenient accommodation can be provided elsewhere, and by the further amending Act of 1882 the Secretary of State is authorised to sanction a scheme, although it only provides for the accommodation of half the persons displaced. The law in this matter has, in my opinion, been wilfully set at defiance in the majority of so-called improvement schemes. It should be observed that under the Standing Orders of both Houses of Parliament provision has to be made in all schemes for improvements involving the displacement of as many as ten houses occupied by the working classes for the re-housing of those displaced. A clause is accordingly insisted on in all Bills relating to public improvements. Why the limit should be houses, not persons, it is hard to explain. I need not weary my readers with all the details of the various Acts of Parliament on the subject, but I cannot conclude without a short reference to model dwellings. Several companies have built what are known to the working classes as "barracks." Most of them have been well built, and sanitation has been carefully attended to. Some ought never to have been built—notably the Cavendish Buildings in Gray's Inn-road. It is a great question whether buildings six stories high are an unmixed blessing to the inhabitants. To toil up and down six flights of stairs constantly during the day cannot be good for small children going backwards and forwards to school, or for women going to their work or going out shopping. Moreover, rules are drawn up and are rigorously enforced; a watchful eye is kept on the conduct of the lodgers; and two recommendations as to good character are generally insisted on before a workman and his family are admitted. I should say that model dwellings, as a whole, were useful for the better class of artisans; and if they were three storeys instead of six, and the rents were lower, they would be of the greatest utility for that class. I know this cannot be while the price of land is so large. The poor and

very poor, however, will not and cannot make use of these dwellings, and as far as I am aware, no effort has yet been made to provide for them.

It may be asked: "Why have you written all this?" My answer is a simple one. I am intensely anxious that the interest of the public, which I fear is waning, should be again aroused. The working men are taking up the question and are determined that something shall be done. I do not wish to wait for agitation. I am only anxious to meet the wishes of those most interested, and I confidently believe it is in the power of the governing authorities to solve the question once and for all. Anyone who has had the patience to follow me thus far and can read between the lines must have understood that, in my opinion, the central municipal authority which we now possess must have complete control for carrying out the present Acts both for building and for sanitation; and must be given additional power to acquire land at a reasonable price, to build and hold dwellings and lodging-houses without any idea of making profits. In other large English and Scotch cities municipal dwellings are to be found. They are urgently needed in London. A healthy home will do more than half the efforts of philanthropic and religious societies. In a great speech on model dwellings, Lord Shaftesbury once said: "That he was certain that he spoke the truth, and a truth which could be confirmed by the testimony of all experienced persons, clergy, medical men, and all who are conversant with the working class, that until their domiciliary conditions were Christianised (he could use no less forcible term) all hope of moral or social improvement was utterly vain." We educate our children down to the poorest class to read and to think, and in the future the destinies of our country will be placed in their hands. It must, therefore, be the concern of every right-thinking man to do all that in him lies to see that they are provided with decent homes, so that by their moral, physical, and social improvement England may ever continue to be Christian and prosperous.

COMPTON.

NATIONAL MUSCLE.

AMONGST the many matters which occupy the public mind at the present time, there is surely none that should command more interest than the health and manliness of the people. The universally acknowledged bodily and mental vigour of the inhabitants of these islands, and the courage, energy, and determination of the British nation have, I believe, their foundation in the health produced by the manly and invigorating sports and pastimes in which this race has always taken such interest and delight.

Different sections of the community continually propose schemes of various kinds, having for their object the moral and material welfare of the people, and also ask for legislation to further the views they represent. For my part, I believe that nothing would tend so much to increase the health and vigour of the nation as a comprehensive scheme for assisting the lads and working men of our population to obtain healthy physical exercise. Of late years we have taken immense interest in the mental education of our people, but we have not displayed the same amount of concern in their physical education. I hold that it is necessary to combine bodily with mental training, if we wish to attain perfection, and it cannot be denied that the bodily health produced by physical exercise must tend in a large degree to add to the mental energy and to develop the intellectual faculties.

Besides the inestimable value of the health that physical exercises produce, they bring out many other characteristics of

infinite benefit to the country and community at large. There can be no doubt that such exercises develop habits of good order owing to the discipline and self-restraint necessary to put a man into "condition," so that he may have a fair chance against others in whatever competition he may enter. Competitions also require control of temper, and without truthfulness they could not be carried on. Healthy competitions involving exercise must do a great deal to promote that love of fair play and appreciation of pluck which have specially characterised the British people for so many years, and also stimulate that generosity of mind and character without which Great Britain could never have done so much in the cause of civilisation, humanity, liberty, and justice as she has done.

Every year our large towns are increasing, and with that increase the open spaces are becoming more and more curtailed. The physique of the people in the large towns is visibly getting of a poorer character. It is hardly necessary to point out that a poor and weak physique tends, as a rule, to reduce the mental vigour of the individual. Neither is there much doubt that the want of healthful exercise generally must tend largely to affect the mental as well as the physical condition of the people.

In the year 1884, out of 65,000 men who wished to enlist in the British army, 430 per 1,000 were rejected principally because of physical inferiority. This is a matter for serious reflection, and one which statesmen and communities should analyse, and consider carefully whether some method cannot be proposed as a remedy. I have mentioned this as there is no other statistical test readily obtainable to show that this want of physique does exist among the people at present. The men who wish to join the army are naturally drawn from the more vigorous portion of the population, as judged by their outward appearance, and the fact of such a large percentage of these being rejected on examination draws attention to the fact that there must be numbers who are precluded by inferior

physique from presenting themselves at all. Besides the men referred to whose health and physique are not what could be desired, there are fortunately, amongst the working classes, very many who have not only great physical strength and energy, but also those high spirits which are always allied thereto. The mere fact of possessing these happy gifts will, in many cases, bring about a wish to prove their superiority in a manner which often ends in fighting and all sorts of disorder. If these men had somewhere to go, such as a gymnasium, or space where out-door games could be carried on, and where they could get themselves in a condition for competitive trials of a manly and honourable character, there would be a safe outlet for those very characteristics which otherwise often get them into trouble; while the right use of such gymnasiums or open spaces would tend to improve the general health and physique of the weakly ones.

There is another large class of the community whose reform has puzzled statesmen, philanthropists, and all who wish their country well. I refer to the intemperate. Drunkenness is the basis and foundation of nearly the whole of the crime of this country; it is also responsible for the larger portion of the disease, as well as for the terrible poverty of working men's families. I admire with all my heart the object the Temperance party has in view, but I do not think they always go the right way to work to gain that object. I do not believe we can make men temperate by legislation, but I do believe that if the inherent love of healthy exercise and out-door sports to be found in the breast of every Briton was fostered and encouraged by providing places and means for him to indulge in it, the drink bill and the demoralising results of it would be materially diminished in the country.

Germany, France, and many other European nations make physical exercise and gymnastic training compulsory in their education code, greatly to the advantage of their people mentally, morally, socially, and physically. It is a matter of intense

wonderment to me that England should be almost the only country in Europe that has not fully realised the benefit which would be conferred on our people by insisting that physical training is, in its way, as necessary for the development of the young as anything that can be done for mental culture. I cannot but think that we should all help to the best of our ability in solving a question which is growing in importance every day as our population increases and open spaces decrease. Lord Wolseley's suggestion the other day as to conscription has been misunderstood by the Press in many cases; he merely referred to it as a means of adding to the discipline, contentment, and physical development of our growing lads and men. But conscription, in my opinion, though it might benefit our people in a minor way, would affect our comfort, and that delightful freedom for which Great Britain is so pre-eminently celebrated among the nations of Europe, by compelling vast numbers of men to undertake duties for which they had no natural liking or aptitude. The enormous amount of good done in this direction to the country through the Volunteer system no doubt prompted Lord Wolseley to make the suggestion.

It is not generally known that there is a Society which has taken up with great energy this important question of physical recreation for the working classes. It was formed in July, 1886, and has met with considerable success, as may be illustrated by the fact that in February, 1888, there were only ten of the principal gymnasiums of the United Kingdom affiliated with it, whereas in February, 1889, there were at least double that number working in connection with it.

The United Kingdom is divided into districts, with one affiliated gymnasium or more in each. Each of these gymnastic clubs supplies voluntary teachers for classes of working men. The Society offers a National Challenge Shield of the value of £200 yearly to these clubs, and local challenge shields to the working class gymnasiums and recreation clubs of London, Liverpool, Manchester, Aberdeen, Dundee, Newport, Dublin, &c.,

also a shield of the value of twenty-five guineas to the National Rounders Association, and a similar one to the North of England Football Association. Challenge shields are also given, for the encouragement of gymnastics, to the army and to the public schools by the Society. In addition, there are gold, silver, and bronze medals awarded for various objects, and certificates of thanks presented to gymnasts who give their voluntary services. The competitions for these shields are becoming so popular that many more associations apply for prizes than the funds of the Society are capable of supplying.

The money required to start the Society in the first case was raised principally by private subscriptions, amongst the subscribers being Mr. Gladstone, Mr. A. J. Balfour, the Duke of Westminster, and other prominent members of both political parties, as well as officers of both services. The prizes now are mostly purchased from the fees paid by the affiliated clubs, varying from one guinea for each of the twenty principal gymnasia, and ten shillings for each of the 200 minor clubs established by the National Physical Recreation Society. About 250 voluntary teachers give their services in teaching over 30,000 working men, whose numbers happily are increasing daily.

As an indication of how working men appreciate the efforts of this Society in their behalf, it may be mentioned that they frequently subscribe among themselves and make presents to their voluntary teachers. The clergy and medical faculty frequently bear testimony that its work is not only of advantage to physical health, but a decided gain in the encouragement of a higher moral tone. If the good work this Society is doing could be brought home to the general public, there is no doubt that its funds would be in a more flourishing condition.

The position and incomes of the upper classes enable them to get that healthy out-door exercise which is associated with various games and forms of sport. We should certainly try to enable the working classes, who have exactly the same *love* of beneficial exercise, to get it by means of out-door games and

indoor gymnastics. The interest in our Association among the working men themselves is daily increasing, as is seen from the fact that the great Rounders Association (for encouraging an essentially working man's game), comprising thousands of working men, has lately joined the National Physical Recreation Society. It only costs a few shillings to buy the plant for a game of rounders, but if played scientifically, as it usually is, it necessitates some self-denial and training among its players in order to have any chance in winning a match.

No one will deny the permanent good to our country if drinking, gambling, crime, and sickness could be reduced. Is there a better way of decreasing these evils and promoting national muscle and manliness, than the methods proposed by the National Physical Recreation Society?

CHARLES BERESFORD
(Captain Royal Navy).

THE RELIGION OF SELF-RESPECT.

BETWEEN the spiritual abasement of the pious and the feverish money-hunger of the worldly, the grand old religion of self-respect gets caught and crushed, like some stately Spanish galleon hemmed in between two icebergs. Here we writhe in the dust, crying "*peccavi*" and "*mea culpa*"; there we scramble on all fours, anyhow, yelping for the *curée*. Here we are worms, there we are hounds; and neither worms nor hounds stand erect in the full light of day, as all men ought and as some still do. Spiritual abasement, however, counts for the very preciousness of spiritual insight with certain of our fellow townsmen; and to writhe like a worm just nipped by a blackbird is a good thing in the eyes of some who yet intone hymns to the Goodness of God, and think man of sufficient importance for the incarnation of the Divine. For self-respect is banished from our Litany, and the filthy rags of righteousness are held worse than nakedness by those who assume to understand all about those celestial councils which are held beyond the clouds. And no sane man despises wealth; for wealth is not only *les nerfs des batailles*, but is the very life of modern society, doing all that was once done by feats of arms when rough knocks were on hand, or by the "coats" which were granted by appreciative sovereigns when the time of rest had come, and men counted up their gains. Without this wealth genius ranks no higher than an amusing eccentricity; birth is an electric battery with the wires unattached; and force of character, greatness of intellect, breadth of view—power indeed, of every kind—is but potential

at the best—"stored energy" not applicable for immediate use. These are the two confessed creeds and dominant principles governing action in the day wherein we live; and those who dispute the one must be content to herd with the sinners whom the saints cast out, and those who despise the other must not wince when they are written down with Dogberry on the calfskin roll of fools.

Yet—*pace* the crawlers who deprecate at every turn the Divine wrath against the creature made, moulded, and set a-going by the Divine hand, and the questers who sniff the golden carrion from afar—there is something to be said for the moribund religion of self-respect—some incense still to be carried to this grand and majestic God who was once the practical *Deus Maximus* of men. It was the religion which ruled the lives of teachers like Socrates, Plato, and all those apostles of philosophy who insisted on the sublime dogma of a man's inalienable duty of responsibility to himself. It made Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius, Cato and Trajan, and a host more, the everlasting symbols of moral greatness and intellectual nobility. It gave its manly flavour to what else would have been the too effeminate, too artificial courtesy of chivalry. It made the Bruce heroic, and lifted our Third Edward above the rank of historic fribbles, where else he might have declined. It rounded off some of the ugly angles of Elizabeth, so that the lion heart redeemed the foxy mind; and in the last act of her tragedy it cast the halo of heroism round sweet, frail Scottish Mary. "Divine right" is its exaggeration among kings; *noblesse oblige* is its formula among gentlemen; personal purity is its outcome with women. With politicians we know it as independence of judgment; as conscience put into the vote; as the refusal to endorse iniquity, though that iniquity be adopted by the party, and though expediency has for the moment displaced the eternal law of right; as the honest man's disdain to barter conscience for place or power; as the steadfast man's incapacity for turning his coat to be in the race for good things, or of leaving the

foundering old vessel of Truth, with the rats who desert when danger is ahead. In private life we see it as fidelity, generosity, magnanimity, large heartedness, and, above all, as sincerity. We know that it inspires a man with the strength of patience and the heroism of forgiveness. Without it good breeding is only a school-taught shibboleth; with it ill breeding is impossible. It is the honour paid by men to the highest thing in man; and he who goes security for one who respects himself need not fear for his bond when the day of reckoning comes. It is a virtue independent of outward circumstances and embracing all sorts and conditions of men. A crowned and sceptred monarch may fail in it—an unlettered peasant may possess it. "Mrs. Morley" holding "Mrs. Freeman's" fan while the imperious favourite slowly drew on her gloves—so slowly that all the Court should the better see the self-degradation of the titular superior—had not a particle of it; the soul of that unknown and nameless girl of the people who killed herself for grief after that shameful waking in the *Parc aux cerfs*, was steeped in it as the rainbow is steeped in colour. It has braced the nerves and strengthened the sinews of the slave preferring flight to the swamp, and death by bloodhounds to the indignity of slavery. It has kept men content like Cincinnatus with the narrowest frugalities of fortune, and has made them refuse to enlarge their store by crooked borings in El Dorado. It has subjected dissentients of all creeds to the extreme penalty of the law—to tortures and burnings, to the gallows and the guillotine, rather than take refuge in dissimulation or find safety in a lie. It has calmed strong passions and restrained rough deeds for the shame that lies in unrestraint and brutish violence. Self-respect is the pillar of fire which, if a man faithfully follow, he shall come at last to the Promised Land, where he shall inherit the good things earned by the diligent and well-doing. But of late years we have let that guiding fire die down to its ashes; we have seen it obscured now with one kind of cloud and now with another; and the grand old cultus is fast becoming

a forgotten faith. This once *Deus Maximus* of men is lying among the stones and weeds, like the fallen gods about the temples of Girgenti, and his very features are obliterated through time, decay, and neglect. Great Pan is dead; and the dust of the ages lies heavy on his closed eyelids.

One thing wherein we of the present day violate the code of self-respect, is in our liberality. Liberality is not charity. We are charitable enough, heaven knows; and from a home for lost dogs to food for the famishing Chinese, we pour out our money like water and our subscriptions are always on tap. Whether this is from sentimentality or ostentation—the force of example or the force of imagination—we do not attempt to decide. It is too curious a phenomenon, when placed side by side with other things, for a mere outsider in the domain of philosophy to determine. All we know is, that the very people who subscribe liberally for kennels and platters for the nameless brethen of their own idolised Tiny and Tray, and almost as liberally for the relief of the almond-eyed Celestials whom they have not seen, will haggle with a miserable flower-woman for twopence or threepence off her early tulips, and will beat down in half-pence the laundress whose hardest work can scarce make the two ends of her small earnings meet. They will perhaps wax tearful and sentimental over the sufferings of round-polled babies, of whom they know less than nothing, dying of fever and famine in the rice fields by the Yellow River. They will canvass for subscriptions to all kinds of remote missions; yet they forget that, to the hungry little ragamuffins clinging to the torn skirts of the poor workers in England, these few pence taken off the sum represent those extra slices of bread which make all the difference between hunger appeased and unappeased. Or, while subscribing to various fancy societies for the moral and intellectual improvement of the poor—giving them music and lectures and amateur theatricals—they will do what they can to ruin the small independent shop-keepers of their immediate neighbourhood by carrying their custom to the big towns. Here, in the

various stores and emporia, they buy at so much per cent. cheaper, for ready money, things which they could buy in their own little village or local town at exactly the same price if they, and all the rest of the well-to-do, would pay over the counter and refrain from running up long bills. They wax eloquent over the sufferings of dumb driven cattle, and are as thorns in the side of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals if a horse strains at his load or limps in his walk; but they do not think of the hardships undergone by their own under-servants, worked often to madness, despair, destruction, by their immediate superiors; nor what will be the ultimate fate of the worn-out old labourers, "hands," employés of all kinds, when dismissed for incapacity and beyond the power of self-support. Those poor creatures will suffer then even more than the heavily laden horse or the lost dog. Their capital of youth and strength is spent, and it has been impossible for them to lay up any store for their old age. If we had this self-respect no employer would suffer that one who had given him these gifts, the sole capital of the worker, should ever want when they had been spent in his service. For the religion of self-respect in more places than one joins hands with that of Christ, and is the manly form of a virtue where the other is the feminine. And again, those who have no true self-respect—this being the rootwork of respect for others, while arrogance is not self-respect—ignore the sufferings they themselves inflict on their subordinates by their imperiousness, their insolence, their want of consideration. Before they have risen from their knees, after they have been making the formal confession of infinite sinfulness prescribed by the Churches, they will blaze out into reproaches and angry objurgations against the servants. This I have seen and heard myself. Had these pious people had one ounce of true self-respect, could they have done this thing?—could they, writing cheques for their subscriptions to various worthy charities, haggle and fight for their miserable little savings of a few pence in the cost, wholly unappreciable in their income while vital to the

poor flower-woman with her large family tugging at her skirts—to the laundress selling her capital of time and strength for such inadequate interest?

Now this vile habit of haggling with the poor was not characteristic of the self-respecting gentry of olden times. This is not saying that there was never a close-fisted curmudgeon in a slashed doublet; never a "Gripe-men-all" in chain armour; never a vixen in a peaked stomacher; nor a shrew in a starched ruff; nor a scold with a "laced head." Human nature is a sadly constant quantity, and has a desperate trick of breaking out in the old places; and all the quality of olden times were not equally self-respecting. Recreant knights had their turn as well as the gallant and loyal; spurs were hacked off as well as buckled on; and *noblesse oblige* was to some no better than the squeak of a scrannel pipe at a village fair. But bargaining with "base churls" was not possible to those of the real sort. To give largesse as became their state was more in the way of these minor Joves than to lessen the already meagre portion of poor old Baucis and Philemon by scantlings of pennyworths. When they robbed and oppressed, it was in a high-handed and irresponsible kind of way, with a certain magnificent brutality, a certain irresistible weight of power, like Apollo slaying the children of Niobe or the "vejoves" smashing down the young vines. When they had their Isaac of York, they pulled out his teeth or roasted him at the fire on a gridiron like to that of St. Lawrence. They compelled him to part with his rose nobles as if they had been so many daisies of the field; but they did not demand discount on a few shillings as we do; they did not chaffer with industrials of a painful hard-working kind, and they did not compete on their own ground with workers whose earnings were their very life, and the lives of their little ones. They were brutal but not mean; tyrannical and oppressive but not higgling. They built their robber castles and burst out on the luckless passers-by as so many kites swooping down on pigeons; but they would not have robbed the glee maiden of

her guerdon, nor have entered into the contest with her on her own ground.

On this modern descent of our social eagles into the stubble-fields of work and commerce, much may be said. We have those who uphold it as a truly noble because democratic movement, and those who oppose it as a degrading one. I, for one, speaking as an individual, do not like the look of it, do not see any nobleness in it, and do see only the degradation of fine old ideas and the confusion of standards rather than the amalgamation of classes. Imagine a gentleman of the stately days that have gone with the snows of yester-year, dignified, self-respecting, knowing his social worth as well as his personal value, appraising the various kinds of work lying before men at their true value and according to their relative propriety—imagine such a one turning an honest penny by making women's gowns and devising dainty head-gear for pretty faces, while there was a tree to fell in the pathless forest, or a mine to dig in the harvestless waste. Imagine a lady of degree of that far-away time setting up a milliner's shop—a woman with plenty of money for all reasonable expenditure, coming down into the noisy, bustling, crowded labour market—selling her paintings, her music, her poetry, what not, that she may enlarge her already liberal margin with guineas snatched from ill-paid professionals. If these squires and dames of birth and breeding are really poor, owing to the changed conditions of society and landed property, then are they free of the market-gates and welcome in the enclosure lawful to all who must work to live. In work itself lies no sense of self-degradation, properly taken. That sweeping of the room given as an instance by George Herbert is as true now as when it was written 250 odd years ago. Or if they are teachers whom the world wants to hear—geniuses whose duty is to shine irrespective of the possible golden gain to accrue—well and good. They are superior to the commercial side of the question altogether. But many are neither teachers nor geniuses. They are simply

the half mechanical turners-out of wholly bad work, which their name and social status float—and which these alone could float. They need their earnings for extra glitter, not for vital substance. And if they had any self-respect, properly so-called, they would do this kind of thing as little as they would dance in a booth or walk on stilts in Hyde Park, for the pennies of the gaping crowd, given freely to street acrobats but not to be desired by the well-placed gentry. This frightful greed of gain characteristic of the present day—this mortar in which all chivalric ideas and class distinctions of honour and self-respect are smashed and brayed, seems to certain of us the most disastrous of all the faults and follies of which those who love humanity would like to see it purged. It invades society from base to summit. The very highest are not free from its stain—the lowest lose their honour in its search. For the old-fashioned economy, where wants were controlled by means, but what was had was paid for liberally, we have the public ostentation which shines like phosphorous in the dark and the private meanness which is the decayed matter by which the light is created. Because there is no self-respect seeming does as well as reality. The difference between those who have this sturdy self-respect in the matter of money, and those who have it not, was well represented by Miss Martineau and a certain sister authoress whose name we will not give. Miss Martineau was by no means rich if she was not miserably poor, and the extra income offered to her by the Government would have been useful enough. She refused it, saying that so long as she could work for her own bread she would owe nothing to the Government and take nothing from the ratepayers. The other lady grew to be wealthy, but she retained the pension granted her in the days of her comparative poverty, and she relinquished her subsidy of so much a year only when she relinquished life and gave up the ghost with her pen.

Where is the self-respect of literary workers who write down to their audience?—writing down, not in simplicity of ideas,

strength of situation, clearness of diction, but in the sense of pandering to low tastes, of keeping up that feverish, ginshop flavour in literature which they know, as everyone else knows, does such illimitable harm? Yet, save the one or two still left, who are faithful to the nobler traditions of the craft, who would be so Quixotic as to refuse the honorarium to be had by doing bad work in a worse groove? Few. Yet there are some, God bless them! who have so much self-respect as leads them to do good work lovingly, faithfully, for small pay, when those big cheques loom large for clever and unscrupulous literary prostitution. The worth of these, the remnant, is commensurable with the tremendous force of the temptation offered. And yet this phrase is all wrong. For where there is true self-respect there is no real temptation to fail. Temptation to fail is in fact as weak as if a few hundred pop-guns were set to batter down a fortress. The pellets pop but the fortress stands. The big cheques loom large but they have no more substantial potency than had the cloud which to Polonius was a camel, a weasel, and a whale, at will.

Others however, do not shrink from anything that makes "good copy"; and if a few puddles are in the path, they take them gallantly, ignoring the splashes. Some little time ago an account, asserting itself genuine, detailed the *ruse* of a girl who, for the sake of this "good copy," set herself to understand the mechanism of a matrimonial agency. The account was amusing, smartly written, and to the point. It was also successful as an undertaking. At the same time it revealed an amount of—well! we had better not call things by their right names. Spades are not always spades, and plain English is not always polite. If indeed, the assertion was genuine, and a young girl under twenty did really do this thing, could we credit her with the barest elements of self-respect? The thing she exposed and the man she betrayed, were both sincere;—but she herself? It may be that these offences must needs come, but woe to those by whom they come! When we choose our *souricières* we do not go to those who profess and practise the

religion of self-respect, but to those who count the sale of all the finer fringe-work of their honour as among the legitimate means of making money, and whose self-respect is part of the impedimenta they, like all wise folk, throw away when they prepare for the great struggle.

Mightily little too, of this same self-respect have those men and women who marry for money and do not keep their side of the bargain. Not a word is to be said against those who so marry and do keep to the strict letter of the convention. It all depends on their ideal of life, and what proportion the highest form of love takes in their imagination. If they can honestly begin where marriage usually ends—with friendship, respect, and so much of personal sympathy as not to render the tie a torture—they will make a success and they have not sinned. But if they have less than this—if they take the good of the contract and render nothing on their own side—then are they disbarred in the courts of honour, and the *Deus Maximus* of self-respect repudiates them. They have no claim to be considered men of honour, nor can they hold their own among honest women. So with those who spread their secret griefs abroad, carrying to the world details of their domestic troubles and chagrins. There is always that other side which is unrepresented in their *ex-parte* statements—always the other colour of the shield which is not seen if it be not turned. But the hysterical cravers for sympathy, and those to whom partisanship is dearer than justice, forget the fairness which belongs to that religion of self-respect, and so long as they can make their own side good care little for the amount of truth left out of the affair.

Self-respect is eminently a masculine quality. It is conspicuous in virile nations and manly epochs, and is wanting to the feminine nations and sybaritic times—when it is exchanged for sentimentality and a washy kind of pitiable philanthropy and negative morality. It is the farthest possible removed from theatrical display; it has nothing to do with brag, exaggeration, or the sect which taps its expanded breast

and cries "*Gare à moi!*" It is the quality which, above all others, makes men truthful, loyal, magnanimous — which demands sincerity as necessary to its existence; for insincerity and self-respect cannot live together—and which, for its own sake, refuses to gain any end by left-handed ways. It has nothing to do with spiritual religion nor imaginative theologies. It does not aim at Heaven by well-doing, nor does the fear of hell keep it straight between the shafts. It is essentially self-supported and is—because it is. A man or woman who has true self-respect is utterly incapable of telling a lie, betraying confidence, failing a friend, or hitting a foul blow in any direction —utterly incapable too, of truckling to power or calling evil good because practised in high places. This is not because he is afraid of the Eternal Wrath, but because he shrinks from his own self-contempt, and the "unlidded eye" is his private consciousness. For his own inherent dignity he could not do such and such things. He could not barter his sense of right for money, fame, position, place; nor could he prostitute his work to a lower level than his best to suit the debased taste of the purse bearers and applauders. He could not even follow his flag into the wrong field, however flowery and fertile, though it would be easy to him to follow it into the desert for righteousness' sake. He could not prevaricate, nor gloze, nor bow the knee to Baal, even with a dispensation. For self-respect knows of no dispensation. Wherein it differs from all other religions. Everywhere else we meet with hierophants and pontiffs, synods and councils, who make and unmake, bind and loose, confer power and grant license. But the religion of self-respect is emphatically in a straight line and narrow—one and indivisible. The "man-holes" of indulgences, extenuating circumstances, partial mercy, personal forgiveness, with the Divine power of granting to an individual the right of breaking a law imperative on the multitude, find no place in its compact and single-chambered tower. To fail is to fail; and the smirch and the bruise remain. The thing once done can never be undone.

The golden vessel defaced by so much remains defaced; and the man who has thus disfigured the loveliness of his hidden jewel has to endure the consciousness of his wrong-doing for ever after. Self-respect itself, in its absolute virility and fortitude and truth, will prevent his attempt to salve it over with weak excuses or weaker regrets. It will give him the courage, the strength to bear his inward shame as a brave man should. Since the times have grown soft and old and introspective, this essentially masculine religion has declined in favour of humility and the doctrine of worms. This religion which made antiquity resplendent, and certain men types for all others to aspire to, is now held to be cold, presumptuous, and of the nature of that pride which goes before a fall. But the desire of certain among us goes fondly back to the time when it was a vital force governing the lives of the true Nobles,—when it and all that it included of honour, magnanimity, consideration and self-control were as integral to a gentleman as courtesy of demeanour and the steadfast endurance of physical suffering.

E. Lynn Linton.

THE UNIONIST POLICY FOR IRELAND.

THE Unionist party is now undoubtedly approaching the period that will determine whether it is to remain, as it is now, the chief factor in English politics, or be driven from power at the next election. Up to the present it has, in my opinion, amply justified its existence. In three Sessions of Parliament it has passed (for I assume the two principal Bills of the present Session will be carried) six measures of first-class importance, viz., the Irish Crimes Act, the Irish Land Act, the Local Government Act for England and Wales, the National Debt Conversion Act, and the Scottish Local Government and National Defence measures. This list does not include Acts such as those for the extension of Land Purchase in Ireland, the Regulation of Coal Mines, Railway Rates, and Merchandise Marks. Measures such as these are of the utmost importance. But in judging the work of a Parliament they cannot, however useful, be classed in the first rank. What is of equal importance is the fact that every portion of the United Kingdom has been dealt with. So that when Parliament meets next Session the turn of Ireland for attention will once more have come round. This, as I have said, will prove to be the turning point in the history of the Unionist party. What is then done will, in reality, decide the question of the Union. Much has been said, and most unjustly said, as to the violation of election pledges by Unionist members. These charges are made mainly by men who, receiving in November, 1885, a mandate to oppose Mr. Parnell, and resist Home Rule, ended in April, 1886, by

surrendering to the Irish Chief, and conceding a larger measure of autonomy than even he had dreamed of. But whatever charges and counter charges may be made, I venture to say that there are very few Unionist members who did not feel in 1886 what they feel in 1889—viz., that the Irish Land Question ought to be settled, and that, in the matter of Local Government, Ireland ought to be treated substantially in the same way as Great Britain. The time is at hand when, if the Unionist party is to live, both these problems must be faced. With those who said in 1886 that the first duty of the Government was to restore order, and to establish the reign of law, I cordially agreed. This end, I rejoice to say, is in a fair way of being achieved. The Queen's writ now runs everywhere. The midnight assassin, the boycotter, the cattle-hougher have all had their operations curtailed. It is once more possible, in most parts of the country, for a man to speak and write what he thinks—to buy and sell and act as he chooses. The Plan of Campaign, no doubt, has still to be fought and conquered. But old things are rapidly passing away. So, it must be remembered, is the life of the present Parliament. Its golden days are already gone. If we are wise we shall redeem the time left to us for work.

What, then, ought the Unionist policy to be? My answer is simple. We ought to deal with and settle the two great questions of Land and Local Government. This done, the Unionist party will be in an absolutely impregnable position, and may go to the country with assured confidence. I may be asked what I mean by "settling" those two questions. Well, I cannot now go into details, or draw Bills. But I can at least indicate what I mean.

First, as to Land. Since 1870, when the English people first faced the Irish land problem, much has been done. No honest or reasonable man doubts this. By a succession of Acts of Parliament we have endeavoured to hedge the tenant round with legal protection. We have, as I think, honestly striven to do what was right. But in this very struggle we have, I do

not say created, but legalised a system of dual ownership in land which is perfectly unworkable—which is causing friction and strife all over the country. Our great aim should be, therefore, to make an end of this hurtful system. To do this effectually one partner in the land must go. The tenant cannot go. The landlord must. I am not pleading for a measure of universal expropriation of landlords. Possibly it will be found that there are many estates where the tenants do not wish to buy—where the landlords have no desire to sell. All I plead for is, that where the desire to purchase and to sell co-exist, or where the landlord is incapable of dealing with his property, the means of transfer shall be at hand. It is not for me, as I have said, to propound a scheme here. Space will not permit. But on one point I am clear. A great transaction of this nature cannot possibly be carried through on Irish credit alone. An Imperial guarantee of some kind, and in some form, will, in my opinion, be absolutely necessary. This guarantee may be limited. It may and can be adequately protected. But I do not see how it can be done without.

It will be noticed that I have put Land before Local Government. I do so deliberately. No one knowing anything of Ireland would dream of any other order. But the Land Question once settled, and the Irish peasant of the South and West freed from the irresistible temptation to skin his landlord, the responsibilities and burdens of Local Government may with perfect safety be placed upon his shoulders. I do not say that disaster will not follow in many places. On the contrary, I am certain that jobbery and incompetence will prevail to a large extent. Incompatible as the Grand Jury system is with modern ideas, I have never heard it assailed on the grounds either of corruption or incompetence. I do not anticipate as much from any new system at first. But things may be trusted to right themselves. In fact, when matters settle down, I should fear parsimony in the management of local affairs rather than extravagance. And in giving Local Government to Ireland I

should be prepared to go further than we have gone in Great Britain. Nor would I give with the one hand and take back with the other. Erect as many safeguards as may be deemed necessary. Provide self-acting checks against malversation and wrong doing. But above everything let us avoid fancy franchises. Let the people, broadly speaking, try their hands. Commit the fiscal business of the country to their care. Let them manage education. Let them control and regulate the drink trade. They cannot possibly do worse in this regard than the Justices have done. They may easily do better. Whether the Poor Law system should be disturbed is an open question. It works fairly well; indeed, it has been made a kind of representative pack-horse, and carries much more than was originally intended. To abolish it would necessarily raise the whole question of the incidence of local taxation. But there can be no question as to confining Boards of Guardians to that which is, strictly speaking, Poor Law business. This would involve the transfer of their sanitary and other powers to District Councils. In short, I should give to Ireland what has been given to Great Britain, and more.

There is another phase of Local Government, however, of infinite importance—I mean the reform of the Castle system. Dublin Castle is only a name. But it is, unjustly I admit in many respects, a name of evil omen. It is absurd to talk of abolishing the Castle. You may as well talk of abolishing Downing-street and all the Government offices. There are things, however, which can and ought to be done. The time surely has come for the abolition of the Lord Lieutenancy. It is as costly as it is useless. It in reality emphasises the idea of a separate nationality. What is really wanted is a Secretary of State for Ireland, with an Under-Secretary, the former being responsible to Parliament for the Land, Local Government, Board of Works, and other Departments. Probably, too, the departments in Dublin stand in need of revision and consolidation.

As regards Private Bill legislation it should always be borne in mind that there is not much of it, and any scheme to set up a costly Commission such as that proposed to be set up by the Scottish Bill would be resisted as a job. But the High Court of Justice in Ireland is certainly not overweighted with work, and might with advantage take over all such inquiries. Or, failing this arrangement, an amalgamation of County Boards might appoint a Court of their own members in each province.

I have merely outlined what I conceive the policy of the Unionist party ought to be. It is for others to fill in the details. Nor have I touched upon Drainage, Railway, and Fishery schemes—all of which I take as a matter of course. I shall at once be reminded of the difficulties attendant upon such an enterprise as I have sketched. No doubt these difficulties are there. The lions are in the path. The Gladstonians, clamouring now for the redemption of pledges, will be forced by their Parnellite allies to object to Local Government. Mr. Dillon has already warned us that this is not what they want. It is also possible that a small section of Conservative Unionists, notably some of those from Ulster, may object. What then? Notwithstanding these difficulties, I hold that both justice and expediency point onward. By a great measure dealing effectively with Irish land, the real difficulty in Irish politics will be met. What has all the trouble of late years been about? Where is the pinch felt at the present moment? The trouble in the past has been on the land, and the pinch at the present time is on the Campaign Estates. Deal with this difficulty in such a way as not only to staunch the wound but to heal the sore, and five-sixths of the Irish trouble will disappear. I have no doubt both wings of the Parnellite party will oppose any such settlement, just as they opposed the extension of Lord Ashbourne's Act. Let them do so. They talk glibly and loosely about winning Ulster seats at the next election. I should like to see a Parnellite candidate explaining to an Ulster audience his opposition to Land Purchase. Ulster members are not elected

by Mr. Parnell. They are elected by the people. It is not necessary for any Parnellite candidate in Munster, Leinster, or Connaught to issue an Election address; in Ulster this formality is still required. As to Local Government, I frankly admit all the difficulties. If anybody cares to put it so, I will admit the dangers. No matter. Whatever risk there may be must be incurred. It is the old question of the franchise over again. You cannot have one system of Local Government in Great Britain and another in Ireland. You cannot have local affairs managed in one country by the people at large and in the other by a selected few. When the franchise was conceded, everything was conceded. This ought to be frankly recognised. But in running these so-called risks what shall we gain? In my opinion, much. We shall, in the first place, have redeemed every pledge we gave in 1886. We shall have satisfied not only our own consciences—we shall have satisfied the consciences of those who sent us to Parliament. We shall have made plain what our policy is, viz.:—The maintenance of the law supreme over everybody, the redress of legitimate grievances, and the preservation of the unity and supremacy of the Imperial Parliament. We shall have given the Irish people just laws, and left the administration of these laws largely to themselves. We may not by doing so satisfy the present Parnellite party. But the future will vindicate our action. And, having made our Irish policy clear, Mr. Gladstone will be in this position. It will no longer be possible for his friends to go about talking of Local Government for Ireland. Those who do so sincerely—a very numerous class, in my opinion—will peel off. And the "Old Parliamentary Hand," when face to face with a General Election, will be forced to declare his policy. References to the "Singleton Abbey Speech" will not then suffice. We shall then see what price Mr. Gladstone paid for the return of Sir George Trevelyan and his friends. We shall see whether the Bill of 1886 is really dead or not.

Half measures are what I most fear. If this policy is to

be carried out 'twere well not only that it should be done quickly—it should be done thoroughly. Let us leave no dregs. Let us deal with and meet sentiment where it can be fairly and reasonably met and satisfied. But having once resolved to go to the root of things, let us see that an edifice is reared against which the rain and the winds will beat in vain.

T. W. RUSSELL.

A MONTH IN RUSSIA.

MY first impression of Russian scenery was one of disappointment, the country between Berlin and St. Petersburg, or rather from the Russian frontier, being flat and uninteresting, and the waste dreary expanse, when covered with snow, inspires a feeling of deep melancholy. To live for months every year, buried in that cold, monotonous silence, is quite enough to account for the vein of sadness which seems to be the basis of the Russian character. It runs through their music, their paintings—everything; and yet they say the people are happy enough. Struggling against great natural hardships, they are patient and peaceful, and not nearly so discontented as in many more favoured climes.

St. Petersburg, full of life and animation, was delightful, with its great broad streets lit by electricity. Comfortably seated in a sledge, behind a good fat coachman to keep the wind off, one never wearies of driving about. The rapidity with which one dashes noiselessly along is most exhilarating, notwithstanding the sometimes biting wind or blinding *chasse neige*. The ordinary Russian sledge, smaller than the American "cutter," barely holds two, but the thick fur rug, even in a common "drosky," or cab, is so well fastened down that you are quite protected from the cold. The troikas, wide sledges with three horses, of which the centre one trots while the other two gallop, have become rather obsolete, and are used principally for travelling, or for expeditions in the country. Nothing is prettier than a really smart sledge with two horses, one trotting,

the other galloping, covered with a large net of dark blue cord fastened to the front of the sledge, to keep the snow from being kicked into the faces of the occupants. The coachman, with his fur-lined coat gathered in at the waist, and his bright red or blue velvet octagon-shaped cap, with gold braid, drives with his arms extended in order to preserve circulation. He hardly ever uses his whip, which is short and thick, and is kept carefully hidden. A footman stands on a small step behind, his tall hat and ordinary great-coat looking a little incongruous, I confess, and marring an otherwise picturesque sight. The horses are so beautifully broken that a word will stop them. The whole time that I was in Russia I never saw a horse ill-used. No need for a "Society for the Protection of Animals" there! The "Isvoshnik," who owns his cab horse, looks upon him as his friend, and very often shares the animal's stall at night.

The town has a thoroughly modern appearance, but little would one dream when looking at those houses, of rather mean exterior, with their small double windows and tiny doors, of the splendours within. Space seems to be immaterial, and the size of everything strikes the English traveller doubly, accustomed as we are to London, with its narrow streets and considered inches. The French system of apartments is very common, although not so universal as in Paris; but where it exists, the entrance and staircases are much more decorated and cared for than is usual when several families live under the same roof, and give entirely the appearance of a private house. As in the East large numbers of servants are kept, and whole families of useless dependents live in the lower regions. I was told of a nobleman in whose house upwards of forty such persons, moujicks with their wives and children, were installed, besides the regular staff of servants. If this was the case in town, one can imagine what it must be in the country. Such generosity, combined with the utter absence of real supervision in the financial management of the establishment, must tax heavily

the largest fortune, and it is no secret that many of the aristocracy are now greatly embarrassed.

All entertainments, whether public or private, are extremely well done. The Russians, who dearly love light, make their houses on these occasions as bright as day, with a great profusion of candles; masses of flowers, notwithstanding their rarity in such a rigorous climate, decorate every available place, and the staircases are lined with footmen in gorgeous liveries. Although the houses are very smartly furnished with all that money can buy and modern art suggest, there is a lack of real refinement and true artistic taste, such as is seen in Paris; but, then, the French are born connoisseurs, and think of little else than artistic comfort; and certainly the average Russian drawing-room is superior to the ordinary English one. If there is a lack of imagination, there is an absence of tawdriness. People do not fly into the extreme, either of the æsthetic or Japanese craze, and if their rooms are furnished sometimes rather too sparsely and soberly for our taste, they have the advantage of being comfortable, and contrast favourably with the overcrowded modern English drawing-room. There is no danger when you move of knocking over several tables, or disturbing an elaborate and evilly balanced structure of paper fans, Liberty silks, and photographs, or of losing your way in a labyrinth of chairs and screens.

Russian opinion asserts that all foreigners bring so much caloric with them that during the first year they do not feel the cold; this may be so, but there is no doubt as to our feeling the heat and stuffiness of the rooms, which dry up the skin and take away the appetite. The double windows and absence of draughts are a great boon, and would be most welcome in our breezy London houses. Of all the palaces I saw, the "Beloselski" seemed the finest. Built in the reign of the great Catherine, whose hand is found in everything of real taste in Russia, decorated and furnished by the best French artists of the day, of whom this Empress was so generous a

patron, with its lovely Bouchers and white carved panellings, it is a unique and fitting abode for the most charming and beautiful of Princesses, the Grand Duchess Serge.

Gatchina, the Windsor of Russia, is a curious mixture of splendour and unpretentiousness. The approach from the station, through a series of small parks, must be lovely in summer. I was surprised to see so few sentries about, and indeed, to all appearances, the Emperor is not more guarded than the Queen at Windsor. The entrance to Gatchina, on the public road, had but one sentry. Without architectural merits, its 700 rooms and endless corridors are filled with priceless Oriental china (cleverly arranged on the walls), tapestries, and art treasures. *Coureurs* in black and orange liveries, their caps adorned with tossing black, white, and orange feathers, give a slightly barbaric appearance to the scene, which is added to by the mass of bowing attendants, and by the two Nubians dressed in white, with turbans and scimitars, standing outside the Empress's audience room. While waiting to be received one is shown into an apartment fitted up in the style of forty years ago, with paintings of mediocre value. Further on there is a large hall worthy of an old English country house, full of comfortable armchairs and writing tables, games, and toys—I even spied a swing. In this hall their Majesties often dine, even when they have guests, and after dinner the table is removed, and they pass the remainder of the evening there. This seems strange when one thinks of the 700 rooms in the enormous building. But the Emperor and Empress elect to live with the greatest simplicity in the tiniest of rooms, which are rather at variance with the Emperor's towering frame and majestic bearing. His Majesty's manner is as simple as are his tastes, and, if rather shy, impresses one with a conviction of his honesty and earnestness.

There are some curious customs at the Russian Court which do not harmonise with the idea of a despotic and autocratic Sovereign. To see the Czar standing while supper is going on,

talking, perhaps, to a young officer, who remains seated all the time, is startling. But tradition is everything in this country, and as it was a habit of Peter the Great, who disliked ceremony of any kind, it is religiously kept.

The etiquette of the Russian Court is much less rigid in some respects than it is in England or in Germany. It is not the custom there to treat the members of the Imperial Family with so much deference as in other European Courts; no lady would think of curtseying to a young Grand Duke, and would only rise when the Empress did, or when the Emperor first entered a room. The ladies, when making their obeisance, bow as an officer might, which, with the present style of dress, is even more ungraceful than the English bob—our apology for a low curtsey. The men, on the other hand, are very deferential, particularly to ladies. At a dinner, when a guest is announced, the host rushes forward and kisses her hand proceeding to introduce all the men present. It is then your duty, if a stranger, to ask to be presented to every lady, and this entails calling on them all, personally, next day. Before dinner the party pass into another room, where, at a table covered with every imaginable *hors d'œuvre* and *liqueur*, they partake, standing, of the "Sacouska," as it is called—an excellent dish, but a dinner in itself. The same may be said of most Russian dishes, which are a little too substantial. Russians, as a rule, have enormous appetites, and are very fond of good living. In old-fashioned houses the guests, immediately after dinner, shake hands with the host and thank him for his hospitality. Most Russian ladies smoke cigarettes, in one of the drawing-rooms generally set apart for that purpose, causing a continual movement, which takes off the stiffness of a formal dinner party, and enables people to circulate more freely. This, in itself, would ensure a pleasant evening; for who has not seen with despair the only chair near triumphantly seized by a bore, whom nothing but the final good-night will move?

I cannot imagine that a Russian lady's life is conducive to

health; little or no exercise, hot rooms and late hours, nothing in the shape of sport, are its main features; skating would hardly be appreciated, were it not for the present Empress, who is an adept at the art. How our usually disappointed skaters would envy them their smooth, large lakes and ice-hills! To go down one of these hills on skates for the first time gives the same delightful feeling of satisfaction and pleasure which is experienced at getting safely over a big fence, leaving the field, perhaps, a bit behind. On the other hand, ladies in Russia have much time to educate themselves, to read, to cultivate the finer arts, and well they avail themselves of it. Speaking many languages, having read profusely, light in hand, they form the most charming society possible, and act as a tonic on a sluggish mind accustomed to the moral and physical fogs of London. They dress well, but affect the heavy richness of well-dressed Germans (if such can be found) rather than the graceful and airy nothings which make up a Frenchwoman's dress. Black is held in abhorrence at the Court, being considered ugly and unlucky, and anyone venturing to wear it in the Royal presence is not only looked upon with disfavour, but is likely to hear of it. It is surprising, considering the monotony of the streets covered with snow, that the people should care to wear sombre colours. The "cheery bit of red," so dear to the English heart, is rarely seen. It is said that Russians are not given to intimacy, and that the foreigner never gets to know them well. It may be so, but I see no reason to credit them with less warmth of heart and faculty for enduring friendships than other nations possess. How strange that Russian women, so eminently fitted by nature and education to influence and help those struggling in the higher vocations of life, should have, seemingly, but one ambition—to efface themselves, to attract no attention, to arouse no jealousies. Yet I doubt not that their influence is felt, but it is not open and fearless as in America or England.

Politics or anything of that nature, whether internal or Continental, are not a subject of conversation in Russia; reticence as regards public affairs is only equalled by discretion as regards those of others. This apathy is not unnatural when one reflects that, with the exception of officials, no one is personally interested in the Government. The censorship of the Press, of which so much is heard, I have been told on good authority is only practically exercised on two subjects—any personal criticism of the Emperor or of the Imperial Family, or any attack on the Orthodox Church. Speaking of the Church, it struck me that strict as the Russians are (particularly the lower classes) in the observance of all the outward and visible signs of religion, perpetually crossing themselves and kissing the ground at every shrine, they do not seem to look upon their churches in the same light that we do. I was a little surprised to see the Governor-General of Moscow, the most courteous and polished of men, hold a species of levee in the Church of St. Sauveur, on Christmas Day, immediately after Mass had been celebrated, and before the Metropolitan and the two Bishops officiating had left the altar.

It is an undisputed fact, I believe, that a *succès d'estime* is unknown in Russian society, and the stranger or diplomatist, however well recommended, or however good his position, is not by any means invited to their fêtes, as a matter of course. After the first introduction, he is only asked according to their appreciation of him. I am not speaking of official circles, where policy is the master of ceremonies. How unlike London, where every house is open to the distinguished foreigner, who finds himself invited, often when he does not know his host. Many people who have not come into contact with Russians imagine that they are rude and brusque. I may have been particularly fortunate in those whom I met, but I was struck with their polished and, at the same time, simple manner. The very moujick, who replenishes your fire, walks in on tiptoe, fearful of disturbing you, and shuts the door so gently that

your heart is softened, and you forgive him his many shortcomings.

One of the most interesting sights which I was fortunate enough to see was the New Year's reception at the Winter Palace. At 11 a.m. on that day the whole Court attends, and society pays its respects to the Sovereign. The Emperor, dressed on this particular occasion in the uniform of the "Gardes du Corps," gives his arm to the Empress, and is followed by the Imperial Family. The train of each Grand Duchess is carried by four young officers, long files of ladies-in-waiting in green and gold, and maids of honour in red and gold, follow, and the procession ends with all the Court officials, who, resplendent in uniforms embroidered with gold, and covered with decorations, walk with measured steps through the long suite of rooms and galleries, lined on either side by officers in various uniforms, blue, white, and red. To these the Emperor says, in Russian, as he passes, "Good morning, my children," they answering to the word of command, all together (a most cheering sound), "We are happy to salute you." The peasantry answer, I believe, "Good morning, little father." In other rooms the ladies of society are assembled, dressed in the national costume, which is of every hue, and covered with jewels, splendid cabochon sapphires, and emeralds, all wearing the "kakoshnik," the most becoming of head-dresses —made of the finest stones, diamonds, pearls, &c., to the plainest velvet. The Empress, with her graceful figure and small head, looking very stately in her magnificent tiara, and blue velvet and ermine train, bows, the Emperor nods slightly, and the *cortège* passes into the chapel to hear Mass. This lasts an hour, everyone remaining standing—an art, by the way, which Royalty alone seems to have the gift of practising without breaking down, or apparent effort.

I cannot adequately describe the scene in the chapel, which, if less perfect in detail, might have appeared somewhat theatrical. On the right all the ladies, kneeling or standing,

form a mass of warm colour, the soft red and green velvets of the ladies-in-waiting predominating, their long white *tulle* veils looking like aureoles around their heads, when touched here and there by the rays of sunshine struggling through the rich stained glass windows. On the left the men form a scarcely less brilliant group, the dark violet silk surplice of a Lutheran clergyman standing out in effective contrast to the vivid red of a cardinal close by. Suddenly the most divine music falls on one's ear, and not only changes the current of one's thoughts, but keeps one spellbound, longing for more. I can truly say I have never heard anything to equal this choir, which follows the Emperor wherever he travels in Russia. Composed of male voices alone, without the aid of any instrument (none being allowed in the Greek Church), it is perfection. The character of the music I found rather monotonous, and thought to myself how they would have rendered one of Mendelssohn's grand anthems. There is a story told of this celebrated choir. Dressed originally in funeral black, they offended the eyes of a maid of honour, a favourite of one of the Czars, who, remonstrating with her for not attending Mass, asked the reason. The maid of honour pleaded that she was suffering from melancholy, and that the sight of the black choir would aggravate it. The next day her excuse was gone, for the choir appeared in crimson surplices braided with gold, and has continued to do so ever since.

Mass over in the chapel, the procession re-forms, a pause being made in the room reserved to the Ambassadors and Corps Diplomatique. The Emperor enters into conversation with a favoured few, who improve the shining hour, as this is often the only occasion they have during the year of speaking to him, except at a few Court balls. The ladies pass before the Emperor and kiss hands, holding on to each other's train, a sight which is more quaint than imposing. When all is over a sitting luncheon is served, and home is reached about three o'clock.